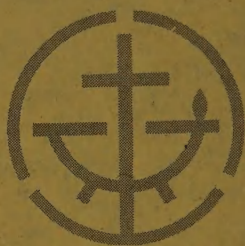


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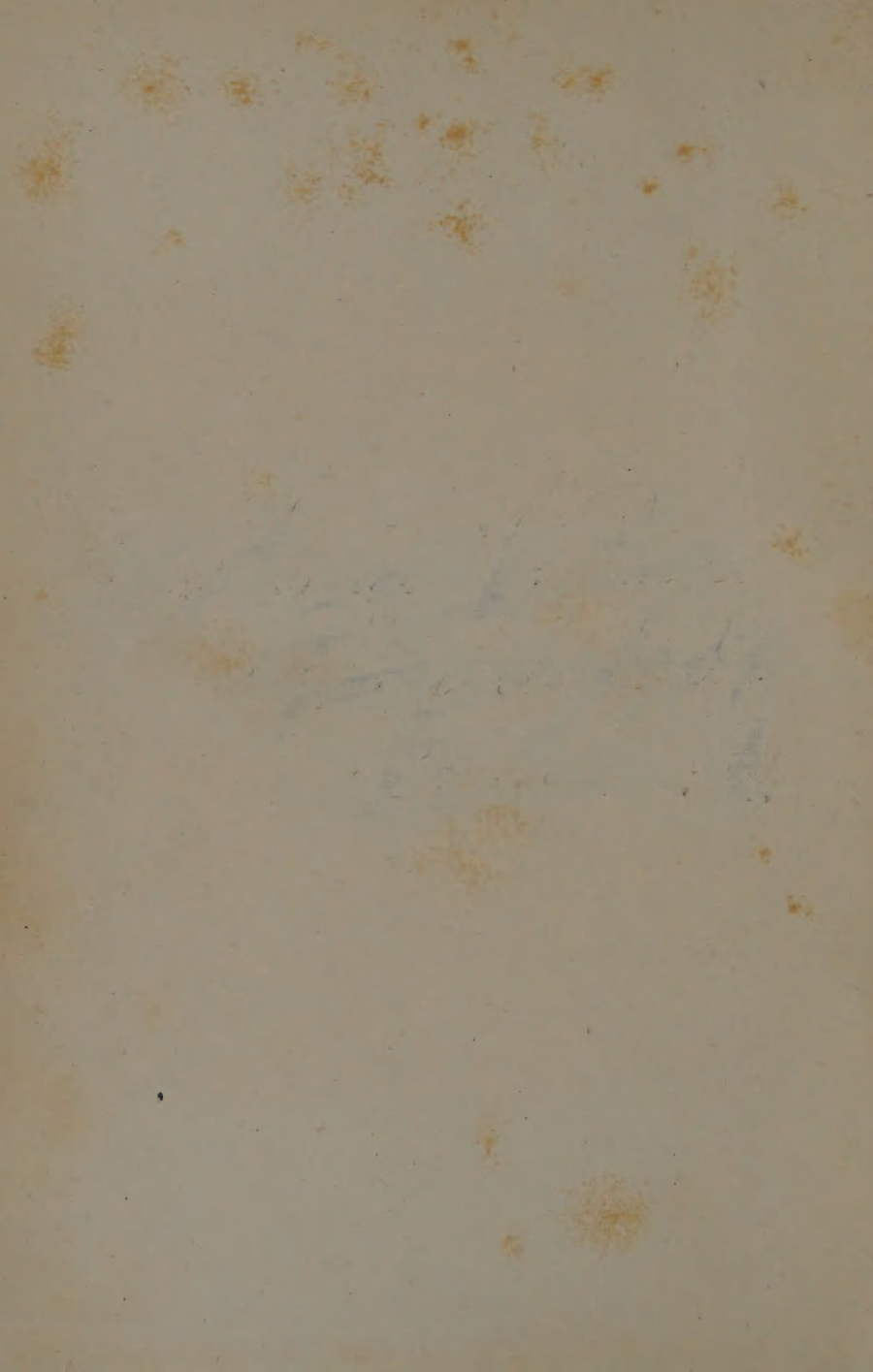


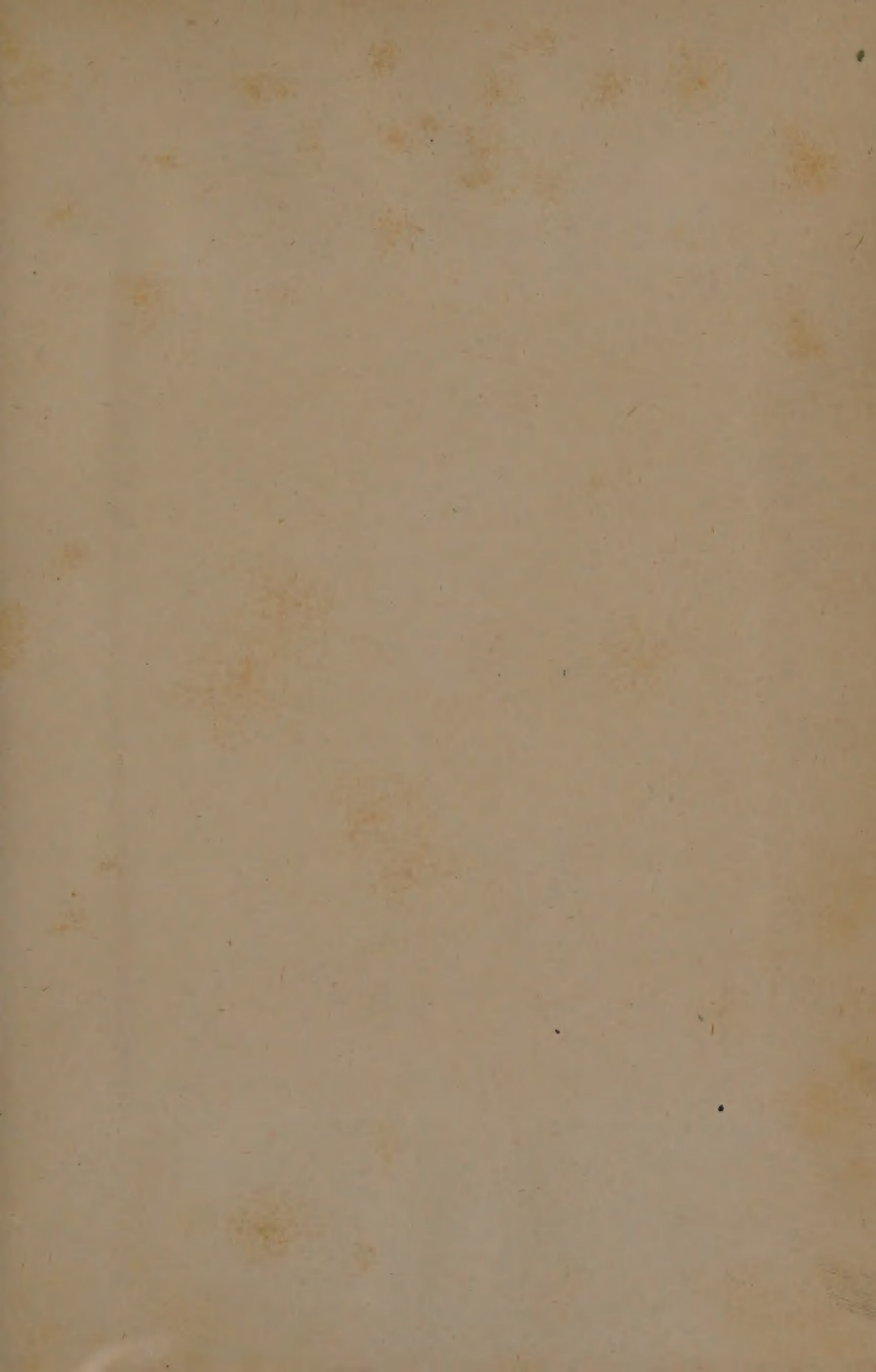
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THE
STORY OF MY LIFE.

BY

M. F. CUSACK,

"THE NUN OF KENMARE."

LONDON:

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,

47, PATERNOSTER ROW.



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P R E F A C E .

AS a general rule, a preface is passed over. I hope this preface will be an exception to the general rule. A preface often contains the keynote of the work to which it is prefixed ; and how can you read the harmony aright if you have not sounded the note of preparation ? I have but a few words to say here, but these few words are important to the understanding of what follows.

It is now three years since I left the Roman Catholic Church. I will tell the story of my entering that Church and of my leaving it in the following pages, but I wish first to say something of a book which I wrote immediately after I had left the Catholic Church. This book was published in America, and I think the Christian people of this country should know the circumstances connected with its publication. I will leave to future pages a full explanation of the power which Rome has obtained in the United States, and of the grave dangers to the whole Christian world which are involved ; for the present I will confine myself to facts which are a painful evidence of the extent of this power.

I supposed, naturally, that it would be an easy matter to find a publisher who would issue a book which should tell the whole story of my life. I found, to my amazement and to my consternation, that it was a very difficult matter. I approached the principal American publishers on the subject, and met with persistent refusal, the reason of the refusal being frankly given. They were afraid of Rome. I asked in vain how it was possible that Rome could have such power as to injure men whose business was long established and prosperous. I found the truth to be that there was no real cause for this fear, save an inexplicable, and, it seemed since to me, a judicial blindness, which led men to fear when there was no cause for fear. This fear is of course a mainstay of the Church of Rome in America. Rome knows well that it exists, and she knows also how to reap the greatest advantage from its existence. I must say, however, that in some cases there was fear which was justifiable from a worldly point of view. The Roman Church is a "boycotting Church." The name may be new, but the practice is as old as the existence of the temporal power of Rome. If the children of light were as true and faithful to each other as the children of darkness, what a change there would be in the world! Rome's power lies mainly in her unity: it is true it is an enforced unity, and a cruelly enforced unity; but all the same the unity exists, and is a powerful factor for evil.

Many of the leading publishers in the United

States supply the Roman Catholic Church with school books, and such other literature as Rome permits to her children. The publishers knew well that the slightest offence towards Rome would at once be visited by a "boycott," and they were not prepared to involve the risk. They knew well that Protestants would not combine to boycott Rome, and why should they be at a certain loss when they would not even be thanked or sustained for upholding Protestant principles? In fact, some of the great American publishers have altered their educational series and their encyclopædias to suit Rome. History must be taught in Roman Catholic schools not according to fact, but according to Rome.

At last I was fortunate enough to find a bookseller who would take the venture of publishing in a Protestant country what might offend a Roman Catholic minority. But he made positive conditions which I was not in a position to dispute. He said that he would publish my manuscript, but only on the assurance that I would not say that I had left the Church of Rome; that I would not make any remark against any Roman Catholic doctrine; that, in fact, I must confine myself strictly to facts regarding my work while in the Romish Church, and my difficulties with bishops, and suchlike matters. The result was the publication of my Autobiography, entitled "The Nun of Kenmare," and my private determination, when I found myself once more in a free country, to tell the whole story of my life. I was subjected to

much misapprehension and criticism from Protestants because it was not in my power to speak more plainly. On this subject I have a good deal to say later. It would be both wise and Christian if those who are in the light would be very tender and very patient with those who are but just emerging from darkness. Our dear Lord did not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. I think, however, from my short experience in this country, that I should have met with different treatment from Christian people in England.

The book has at least one value, independent of the writer or the circumstances under which it was published. It contains documentary evidence which cannot be disputed, because I hold the originals, that Rome is a Church which will not hesitate to crush any one who tries even to do good works, which she professes to commend, if they are too liberal in their way of doing them. These facts will be found in the present volume.

The work was, indeed, described as a "brief against Rome"; and it is well that an authentic history, from indisputable sources, of the cruel injustice which sisters suffer at the hands of those very persons who profess so much admiration for the sisters' life, should be on record. My publisher, to whom I owe thanks for great personal kindness, and for his courage in issuing the work even as it is, did not realise the position or dangers of ritualism; hence it was not thought to be necessary to enter on the subject as I

have done in the present work. In America it has not yet reared its hydra-head as it has in this country ; and as the Episcopal Church in that country is but one of many forms of religion which Rome tolerates, until she has obtained liberty to deprive them of liberty, a history of my connection with the ritualistic party would not have been of the same value in the States as I hope it will be in England.

A history of one's life is not an easy book to write. One is almost sure to fall into the fault of either saying too much or too little. I can but ask the reader to remember my peculiar circumstances, which make it a painful duty for me to write at all.

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CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

“We see but dimly through the mists and vapours
Amid these earthly damps.” LONGFELLOW.

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”—JOHN i. 6.

A TOUCHING story is told of the early times of Christianity in England. When Christian missionaries came to the northern parts of the country they found ignorance of the true God, but there was, as St. Paul has declared of other heathen nations, a desire to know Him. He was “ignorantly worshipped.” The Venerable Bede tells us that the missionaries were told by the people whom they had come to convert, “We know not whence we came, or whither we go. We are like the little birds who come into our houses in winter ; we know not whence they came or whither they go.” How strange are the mysteries of our being, and how little we think of these things ! We are no longer ignorant as to whither we go, but alas ! too many of us make but little use of our knowledge. We know, too, whence we came, for Scripture tells us. What was said of St. John the Baptist is also true of each of us. “We are sent from God”—sent from God for a Divine and glorious purpose ; sent from God with a mission to do, as surely and truly as ever apostle or prophet was sent. We may

not have the gifts of an apostle nor the inspiration of a prophet, but we have our work even as they had theirs.

And so each little spark of life comes from the Eternal Father. "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." We are His; we are "sent by Him." What confidence and courage this thought should give us in all the trials and troubles of this mortal life! He who has sent us will not forsake us. He who has commissioned us to do a certain work in this world will enable us to do it. How little we can foresee the destiny of the new-born babe! The responsibility of caring for this little being, who may be the worker of so much good or of so much evil, is something to make the wisest think more seriously. It is only the wise who fear; the foolish virgins never thought; any time would do for getting oil for their lamps; but the wise are always ready, because they are wise. Oh, mothers, who look on your new-born babes, and who fondly trace the likeness to the dear father, or the dear mother, or sister, or friend, think, I pray you, of the other likeness—the likeness of God! It is for you to preserve that likeness; it is for you to see that the blessed relationship is understood when your little one is capable of understanding it. Would to God that the Christian mother was as earnest and as early in dedicating her child to God as the poor Catholic mother is in dedicating her child to Mary! Often the Catholic mother has her child dedicated to Mary even before it has seen the light of an earthly day. Often, indeed I may say rather with rare exceptions, the Catholic mother dedicates her child to this goddess, as she may well be called, of the Roman Church for the first seven years of its life, even dress-

ing it not in the fashions of the world, but in the garb supposed to be the livery of the Virgin. Surely, if she could know what was passing on earth, it would be indeed a grief to her faithful heart to think that she could be thus substituted for God, and that the helpless child should be given into her supposed care, instead of into the care of Him who so loved the little ones and so tenderly blessed them.

For myself I can only say that my parents were Christian people. My father was a devoted Christian, I believe all his life—at least, I always remember him as such. My mother was a nominal Christian at least, but I doubt if her soul had ever been touched by the fire of Divine love, as had the soul of my saintly father. I was born in the spring time of the year ; and I am sure that my father, at least, offered up many a prayer for his baby girl, whom he so dearly loved, and who certainly loved him, as few girls have loved a parent, in return. But, after all, what can a father do? He may love, he may provide for his little ones, but the mother it is who educates.

Dear mothers, may I say a little word to you also in regard to the glorious mission which God has given you? Surely, if we only thought of it as we should, there is on earth no mission so great or so noble as that of the mother. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." There is also sent to you from God this man or this woman. Yes, right from His hand, and no other. He gives into your keeping that which is so precious to Him, that He has given His only Son to die for this particular soul. And you, dear heart, what are you doing with God's treasure? How many a mother has said, when later in life her boy or her girl has achieved fame, as this

world calls it : "If I had known its future when my child was yet young, how much more I could have done for it?" But eternal fame awaits every child. And you, what are you doing to enable your little God-sent one to achieve that fame which will have no ending?

In writing this book I must tell things just as they were, even if it is sometimes painful to me to do so. My life has been one long pain. What matter a little more, if I may be the means of saving others pain, or helping others to a happy eternity!

I have said that my mother was a nominal Christian. I believe she died in faith and trust in Jesus; but whether it was that she was by nature cold, or that her health, always delicate, made her think less of her children than other mothers, I know at least that she did not help me in a Christian course, though she did not hinder, except on one memorable occasion, which I shall relate later.

Perhaps you will like to hear something of my father's and mother's family. The Cusacks are well known both in England and Ireland. We are descended from an English or Anglo-Norman family of that name, who obtained estates in Ireland. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth Sir Thomas Cusack was Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and had some fame as a statesman, and some credit in times when every man was for himself, as one who was honest and fair in his dealings with the Irish "rebels." The Cusacks were, of course, Roman Catholics in pre-Reformation times, but whether they abandoned the superstitions of Rome because others did so, or to secure their property, I do not know. The Reformation, for obvious reasons, reached the lower classes last; and there are

still a few of the name who have a humble position in life, who profess the Roman Catholic religion, but who have not been connected with our family for several hundred years. Certainly the profession of Romanism does not tend to intellectual or social advancement. The very few Catholics of the name of whom I have ever heard are keeping "liquor saloons" in America, and one is a notorious prize-fighter. They are, I believe, devout Romanists.

My grandfather Cusack was married three times, but the step-brothers were so attached to each other, that I scarcely knew which of my uncles were my father's own brothers. One of my father's brothers was the well-known Surgeon Cusack, connected for so many years with Stephen's Hospital, Dublin, where his private charities equalled his skill in surgical treatment. I have been told he saved many a poor man's life by paying himself for country lodgings for those on whom he had operated. So great was his fame as a skilful surgeon, that I found that students used to go even from the United States to study for a short time under his direction and attend his clinics. Later, I will give a remarkable instance of how things "come round" in this connection. I was told that my uncle began as a boy—indeed, almost as a baby—his experiments in surgery, and manifested such a decided taste for dissecting birds and the smaller animals, as to show that he had what, for want of a better word, we may call a genius for anatomy. My dear father manifested also an early taste for medicine, and promised, if his health had been spared, to have been as famous as a physician as my uncle had been as a surgeon.

My mother was a Miss Stoney, and belonged to an old Irish family. My grandfather Stoney lived at

Oakley Park, near Birr, or Parsonstown, as it is sometimes called. This lovely place has now passed into the hands of strangers. I remember visiting it when quite young, before all the timber had been cut down, and there were a few giant oaks left to show what had been, as a sample of departed glories.

My mother was fond of speaking of her early life. She was one of a very large family, and the youngest. Her mother died while she was yet a babe, and she was adopted by an aunt (Miss Baker), of whom I shall have much to say later. Miss Baker was one of the Baker family of Lismacue, in the county Tipperary. The estates still, for a wonder, remain in the family. The Bakers were originally from Kent, and were, I believe, one of the "planted" families in that much-planted county. They have had the name of being good and liberal landlords. I know not how they have fared in late years, but the early history of my grand-aunt's brother is worth recording briefly, as a contribution to the history of Ireland. Mr. Baker, of Lismacue—I speak of events which happened in the early part of the present century—was a magistrate, and, I believe, a very active landlord and a man of great social influence. I know that the Bakers were intermarried with the O'Briens (Lord O'Brien's) family, with Lord Massy's and Clarina. The then Mr. Hugh Baker was a very intimate friend of the then Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Baker had no family, but he devoted himself to what he believed to be the best interests of the always-troubled island. He was, of course, a Conservative, and probably a strong party man. My great-aunt was passionately attached to him and to her sister-in-law, and lived with them when not in England.

On one occasion Mr. Baker somewhat incautiously announced that he had secured evidence to convict some men who had been guilty of a gross agrarian outrage. They had burned down the cottage of a poor widow and murdered her, and, I believe, her children, in a brutal manner. His impudent remark cost him his life. He left home one fair summer morning, but he never returned alive. His wife and his sister had waved him the usual farewell from the windows of the study. He rode to his fate, slowly and unconsciously, down the long and beautiful avenue, which I too well remember, for I passed through that avenue and those gates with a broken heart many years later. His servant, who had been many years in the family, rode after him. He knew his master was riding to his death, but never a word did he say to save him.

As Mr. Baker neared the entrance gates thirteen men sprang out, and of the thirteen twelve fired. He fell dead without a word, and his riderless horse dashed up the avenue back to the house, while the men, having done the cruel deed to one who had never harmed them, dispersed, hoping to secure safety by their number. How often I heard the pitiful story from my dear grand-aunt, who adopted me immediately after my birth, as she had previously adopted my mother. I may not linger on the story, full of interest as it is, for there is yet so much to say. The first intimation the bereaved wife and sister had of the terrible doom of the one they loved so well was the sight of his riderless horse. They were in unhappy and priest-ridden Ireland, and it needed no words to tell them what had happened.

Sir Robert Peel sent down a Special Commission

to try the murderers. The whole story may be found in the Parliamentary debates of the year. I obtained a copy of "Hansard" from a friend's library, so that I might verify the narrative engraved on my memory. from repeated recitals, and I found it was all too true

Public indignation was excited, but that would not bring back the dead. Sir Robert Peel, having been a great personal friend of my grand-uncle, used every effort to have justice done, but of what avail? He could not heal broken hearts. My dear aunt and her sister-in-law never separated until the latter died soon after of a broken heart. They went to live in England as soon as possible after the sad tragedy, where Mrs. Baker died. My grand-aunt was, at that time, a young and very beautiful girl; she had also a large private fortune, but she never married, and she never wore anything but mourning till the hour of her death, though she lived to old age.

As usual in Ireland, there was a traitor to turn evidence against the men whom he led on to crime. Where was the warning word of the priest, the supposed "father" of the people, to save them from the destruction of body and soul? So close are the ties between priest and people, that it is almost impossible for the priest to be ignorant of premeditated crime. When has he ever said a word to stay the murderer's hand? It may be said that the word is spoken, but that it is not heeded. When we know, as all history tells us, and as daily facts evidence, that the Romanist is absolutely under the very feet of the priest in all things, it is useless to defend a cause against which evidence is all too plain.

I said that twelve men fired, but one refrained. That one was the steward, whom my poor uncle had

trusted, and in whom he had unlimited confidence. How could he suppose that a man on whom he had showered favours all his life would have conspired to murder him, and for a mere act of justice to a poor woman? There was surely some deeper motive. The landlords, as a class, were marked for extermination, and it needed little provocation to carry out the orders of secret societies. This man anticipated the probable result of the outrage. He was prepared to turn King's evidence against the twelve hapless men whom he had seduced into crime. The twelve men were hanged at the same time and on the same spot where they had murdered their master, and for a time the terrors of the law held crime in check in blood-stained Ireland.

My mother too often told me traditions of the fatal '98. She told me that the very servants who had been reared in the family had pikes hidden under their beds, and in haylofts, to murder their master and mistress at the word of command; yet the Stoneys were, if possible, more liberal landlords than the Bakers, and, from all I could learn, were too indolent to have exercised any special attempts to improve the country, which are so bitterly resented on occasion.

It was but natural that all this crime and punishment should engender bitter feeling on both sides. The present is not the time nor place to enter on vexed questions of Irish history; but the record of family events have an importance, which they would not have under other circumstances, when they throw light on contemporary history. It was a time of heavy drinking, of high play, and reckless misdoing on all sides. My grandfather Stoney, an easy-going

man, anxious to conciliate both parties, used to invite the priest one Sunday and the parson the other to dinner. But it was all in vain. Party feeling ran far too high for any attempt at peacemaking to avail.

I shall have to speak later of one of my uncles, who was for many years the rector of the parish of Castlebar, in Ireland, whose hatred of Rome was no doubt fostered, if it was not caused, by the scenes which he witnessed in his childhood. Later in life he learned that hatred was not the way to win souls to Christ, and regretted the unwise, if not unchristian zeal, which marked and marred the early years of his ministry. He was associated with Mr. Nangle in what was called the Achil Mission. The object was to convert Romanists ; but, good as the object was, the manner in which the work was carried out showed that the workers were as ignorant of the real character of Romanism as they were of human nature.

It is very difficult for a Protestant to understand the strength of Roman Catholic convictions, or the system of spiritual terrorism in which the Romanist is educated. My uncle and his friends, not appreciating this, thought that the poor Irishman could be induced to leave his Church by offering him temporal advantages for so doing ; but never was there a greater mistake, or a more fatal policy, as the result proved. The poor Irish peasant needed to have his ignorance enlightened before he would willingly listen to truth ; and this, though not a hopeless task, was one which required no ordinary tact and patience.

My aunt, Miss Baker, employed a Scripture reader on her Irish property for many years, but I never heard that he did much in the way of conversions ; it, however, was all she could do, and afforded her

the comfort of thinking that the seed sown might some time bring forth fruit. I do not know the exact date of my father's marriage—it was certainly sixty years ago—nor do I know much of the circumstances. My dear father was, I have been told, a very handsome man in his youth, and my mother was in her day a beauty. Both were fond of music, and probably that formed the basis of a mutual attachment. Subsequent events proved that the attachment was much stronger on my father's side than on that of my mother. The very best of worldly prospects were before the young couple for several years after their marriage, when, in a few short hours, all was changed, and every earthly hope was blighted.

I have said that my grand-aunt had adopted my mother while she was but a babe, in consequence of the death of her mother, Mrs. Stoney, who was my aunt's sister. When I was born my aunt, still, I suppose, longing for the love of a little child, adopted me also. She took me wherever she went, having always a servant, on whom she could depend, to care for me. She spent most of her time with my mother and father, or visiting friends; later she lived for some time in Dublin with Lady Fitzgerald, a near relative, who was a widow, and joined her in housekeeping for companionship.

My mother fell into very bad health after the birth of my brother; in fact, she never recovered her health afterwards, though she lived an invalid for many years. Her time was passed mostly at our country place near Dublin. On one too memorable occasion my father, whose medical practice had begun to be very extensive, remained for the night in our house in town. He came there very late and very weary, and, as he

had not been expected, there was no place ready for him, the painters having occupied every room. In his weariness he threw himself on a sofa and fell asleep, only to awake towards morning with agonising headache and every symptom of deadly illness. He sent at once for his brother, Surgeon Cusack, who was but a moment in the room when he discovered the cause of my father's illness. A number of pots of paint had been placed for safety under the couch on which he had slept ; some of them were white lead pots, and the result was that my poor father was actually poisoned, though he lived a life of terrible suffering for many years after.

Strange mystery of Providence ; this was the beginning of the end. This event, which seemed so like an accident, was the cause of a complete change in his life, and seemed to be the originating cause of my own extraordinary and eventful career.

In the next chapter I will relate some little incidents of my childhood which I distinctly remember. The events recorded above were so often repeated to me by others, that they are as indelibly impressed on my memory as if I had witnessed them myself.

CHAPTER II.

EVENTS OF MY EARLY LIFE.

“Till the gathering evening closes,
Christian life’s an earnest thing.”

MONSELL.

“How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.”—ROM. xi. 33.

I CANNOT say that I “remember the house where I was born,” but I do remember distinctly a little window, where the early sun came in with its full and blessed radiance, in the house where we removed after my dear father’s serious illness. How many things I remember after all these years! This narrative will, I hope, be at least of benefit in showing at what a very early age children receive impressions which influence and affect them in later years. One of the first things I remember was the return of my father and mother from what must have been to them a very delightful trip to England. I suppose I heard my mother speak of it so often, that I remember what she told me as if I had witnessed it myself. One of my father’s brothers-in-law—Mr. Warren, late of Killiney Castle, Dublin—thought that it would do my father and mother good if they joined him and his two sons, then mere boys, in a coaching tour through England.

They took his carriage or my father's with them, and engaged post-horses as they were needed ; and in this way spent some weeks visiting the most famous parts of England and Wales. My dear grand-aunt remained with us children till their return. I seem even now to remember my dear father's fond greeting when he came back, and the many presents he and my mother and uncle brought us children. In that connection I may say that it was made a reproach to my brother, which he did not always take in good part, that he was fond of dolls, which I utterly scorned, and handed over mine to him willingly in exchange for picture-books. Once indeed, when his little soul was overburdened with the playful ridicule which his propensity for my playthings called forth, he was found to have taken refuge under a bed, dollies and all, and had sobbed himself to sleep with his treasures. After that he was allowed to be happy his own way. In later years his conduct, when he served his Queen and country in the Crimean War, showed that his love of "dollies" in early days did not tend to effeminate his later years.

As for myself, I was told that a picture-book was the height of my ambition, and that I learned to read without knowing it, through the kindness of my nurse, who never wearied of reading me child's stories such as were then published. I used to sit on her lap on the floor, her favourite position, or idea of comfort. She used to tell me the little words as she read them ; and as I have an unusually retentive memory, I soon learned to read a little, and the rest followed easily. In the same way I learned to play the piano before I could read a note of music, and my love for the instrument made it casier for me to go through the

subsequent drudgery of learning to read music. Later in life I had the credit, whether deserved or not, of being an accomplished musician. My grand-aunt, or, as I may as well call her at once, as we did as children, "Grannie," spared no expense on my education, which proved no little advantage to me in my subsequent literary career.

After a time, my father having in some degree recovered, as we supposed, from the effects of the lead poisoning which had so nearly deprived him of life, began to practise his profession again. His tour in England had benefited him materially, and there was room for hope that he might continue the profession to which he was so much attached, and which, though both he and my mother had some private means, was necessary for the help of his children. I remember well two of our country neighbours, who were constant visitors, and who thought much of my father's professional skill, and, if possible, still more of his private character. One of these was the famous Mr. Guinness, the founder of the Guinness family. I remember the old gentleman so well—for to tell the truth I stood in considerable awe of him, though I never heard anything but words of kindness from his lips. He was then old, and very grave and austere in manner; and I think he was very much feared also by the younger members of his own family. I saw more of the family later, when I was residing in Torquay with my Grannie. One of his daughters was then married to Mr. Pitcairn. They had a young and lovely family, and I remember so well their kindness to me in time of trial. Mr. Pitcairn had meetings regularly in his house, which my grand-aunt and I attended regularly. I believe he was unable to

exercise his regular ministerial functions from ill-health.*

But I must return to my early life. We had also for friends and pleasant neighbours the family of Sir Compton Dumville. One of my earliest recollections is connected with this family. I remember, as if it were yesterday, seeing their carriage drive up to our hall door with an immense case, which looked to me like, what indeed it was, a long, narrow house. It was a doll's house, of the most elaborate and costly construction, which, alas! was not appreciated by the recipient as it should have been. A library of children's books would have been far more to my taste. My young readers—and I hope I shall have many—may like a description of this beautiful gift. The first floor was furnished as a kitchen, and every little toy was complete for culinary purposes. The cook was dressed in appropriate costume. The next room was a parlour, where dinner was displayed, and the parlour-maid was in waiting. I do not know where this wonderful toy-house was purchased, but I remember every detail as if I had seen it only yesterday. All the spoons, coffee-pots, and tea service were of solid silver. The room above the parlour was a drawing-room, where a number of young lady dolls disported themselves in the then fashionable attire. Over this was the bedroom, with its beautiful dolls' beds, all as complete as if for the use of grown-up people. Child as I was, I do think I felt more grateful for the affec-

* I am sure both he and his dear wife (*née* Guinness) must have gone long since to their eternal rest. If this should meet the eye of any of their children, it would give me great pleasure to hear from them.

tion for my dear father, which prompted the gift, than for the gift itself.

Everything promised a happy childhood ; but all too soon the blow came which has left its impress on the whole of my future life.

We had for our clergyman a devoted Christian, who was also a very dear friend of my poor father's ; perhaps I should say of my rich father, for if ever a man was rich in God's grace he surely was.

I had a severe fever—how brought on I do not know—while we lived in this delightful country place. I suppose I was always what would be called a religiously inclined child. I remember, as soon as I could know what prayer was, I used to try to lie awake until the nurse came up from family prayers, though I never told any one of this, nor do I know that I had any special reason for doing so except that I liked to hear the distant sound of the hymns which always accompanied the little service. On Sundays, as soon as we were at all old enough to understand anything, we were sent to the Sunday School, which Mr. McConchie conducted himself, for there was but one class, the Protestants not being numerous in that part of the country. (I should have said that we lived then at a place called Coolock, near Santry, the residence of the Dumville family.) The Guinness family had a very beautiful place between Coolock and Santry.

When we were quite too young to know anything of what a religious service meant, my mother used to take us to church ; but she contrived to keep us quiet during the long service by a judicious distribution of sugar-plums. I do not recommend this method of attracting children to religious services ; but I do know that we never gave any trouble, and that we associated

sugar-plums and church intimately, until old enough to know better.

After all, her plan, which was undertaken with the very best motives, may not have been worse than the custom of compelling children to remain quiet at a service of the meaning of which they were absolutely ignorant, with the result of making them associate religious services with misery of body and mind.

I used to delight in the Sunday School class, when I was old enough to understand its meaning ; and we were not sent to this until we could understand. Mr. McConchie had a happy knack of interesting us by talking of things around us which we could understand. I remember his talk of the little lambs which we saw in the fields in the spring-time, and which led up to a talk of the Good Shepherd, who, he said, cared for us as the shepherd cared for the lambs which we could hear bleating in the meadows outside. During the wanderings of my fever, when my dear father feared that all his skill would not avail to save the life of the child whom he idolised, I astonished him by asking constantly for the Good Shepherd. Mr. McConchie had often called to ask if I was still living, and they thought perhaps it might please me to see him, so one day he was brought to the room where I lay tossing in the burning restlessness of a child's first serious illness. I had, of course, known him very well. We children all loved him dearly, and in some way his presence seemed to soothe me. He talked, I am told, for a few moments about the Good Shepherd ; and either the well-remembered voice or some association of ideas soothed me, and I fell, as he spoke, into a refreshing slumber, and awoke out of danger.

How often have I asked myself since, Why did God spare me? why was I not allowed to go to the Good Shepherd when I was innocent of all sin, and when I knew not what sorrow meant? Who could have asked that my life should have been spared if my future had been foreseen? Often and often in later life have I said, in the agony of my soul, Why was I spared to suffer as I have suffered? Why was I spared for a desolate and lonely old age?

A very serious epidemic broke out when we had been for a few short years in Coolock, and once more, and finally, my dear father's health broke down. Somehow I do not remember personally the circumstances, nor can I tell the exact date. I think I must have been about eight years old at the time. I fancy the epidemic was some kind of cholera, for I heard it said often that my dear father's devotion to the poor, and his laborious work amongst them, had brought on a return of his illness. It is strange how children remember so distinctly some events which every one supposed they could never have noticed, and forget other events which, with advancing age, it might have been supposed they would have remembered.

I think we moved then from Coolock to Kingstown, near Dublin. I know that my dear father was obliged to give up the profession which he loved so well, and all the literary work which was, if possible, dearer to him. I remember very well some of the events of our stay in Kingstown. There were two individuals whose personality is vividly impressed on my memory; one was the celebrated Mr. Pope, whose controversy with Father Maguire was the talk of the day. Mr. Pope lived also at or near Kingstown, or,

I believe I should say, Monkstown. I think if I was landed in that part of the world again I could find my way unhelped to the house which we occupied, and to that where Mr. Pope lived, as well as to the villa where the other friend lived whose memory is so connected with my early recollections.

This lady was the Hon. Catherine Massy. She was a near relative of my mother's, and of course of my Granny's. I do not know why I was not with my adopted mother at this time, but I think Grannie yielded to the earnest request of Lady Fitzgerald to remain with her for a longer time than she had anticipated. I remember being taken to see my aunt at Lady Fitzgerald's house very often, and to being in considerable awe of the latter stately lady, who, I was told, "did not like children." I know her numerous dogs did not like any rivals in the affections of their mistress, and I was in considerable awe of both dogs and mistress whenever I had to pay a duty visit. Yet of all this, childlike, I never said a word.

To return to Miss Massy before I say more of Mr. Pope and his once famous controversy. Miss Massy was at this time quite young, but she had been a helpless cripple for several years. Her family had been victims of rheumatic gout, and she was the last and saddest sufferer. Her illness began after her return from riding with her brother, Lord Massy, when she was caught in a shower of rain, and did not take sufficient care to avoid after-effects. So helpless was she at this time, and to her dying day, that she could not even feed herself, or lift her hand to her face to brush off a summer fly. And yet she was a happy Christian. Except my own dear father, I have

never met a sufferer who so truly rejoiced in the Lord while she suffered ceaselessly in the flesh. I suppose I was naturally tender-hearted and gentle; but however that may have been, she liked to have me with her often, while she had a perfect dread of other children. The least touch caused her such agonising pain that she lived in nervous dread of any one coming near her whom she could not trust; and yet she was very fond of children. I remember how proud I was when she would allow me to brush off a fly, or hold a flower near her so that she might inhale its perfume. She had a large establishment, and beautiful gardens and hot-houses. A man-servant and a maid—old servants of the family, who had lived with her ever since her illness commenced—were the only persons who could lift her, and even when lifted by either she often screamed aloud in agony.

Her house was constantly open for devotional services, and once a week at least Mr. Pope gave lectures there, and held a prayer meeting. This, and his frequent visits, were her greatest pleasure.

I have now to say a word of Mr. Pope. I suppose few indeed of those who read this book will have even heard his name. Such is earthly fame! And yet at this time he was one of the most famous men of the day. He was a man of great learning, and deeply read in Scripture. I do not know the origin of his once famous controversy with Father Maguire, but I well remember a remark of my father's (perhaps because I often heard my dear Grannie repeat it in later years), that he would have done better if he had not allowed Mr. Maguire to draw him from the Scriptures into the fertile field of controversy which the "Fathers" opened up.

I know that the controversy lasted for several weeks, and that, as usual, both sides claimed the victory. Mr. Pope made a deep impression on my childish mind, an impression which was no doubt enhanced by his personal appearance, which was remarkable. He was very tall, very dark, and his manner was grave, almost to sternness; yet children never shrank from him. I think I never missed the lectures which he gave at my cousin's house, and if I had no one to come with me, I am told, I went alone. I do not suppose I understood much of what he said; but his voice, his manner, and whole appearance had a fascination for my imaginative mind. His favourite subjects were the Psalms, but above all the mysterious prophecies of Hosea; and his remarks on them enthralled me in a way I can even now scarcely understand. My childhood was shadowed by the illness of my father, to whom I was passionately attached, and by some strange foreshadowing of a life of sorrow; and I listened, fascinated and rapt, when he spoke of the marvels which God would do for His suffering people, and the triumphs and consolations which awaited them hereafter. I remember distinctly an address he gave on the text, Hosea ii. 14: "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her."

I heard a sermon about the same time which also attracted me, and had a peculiar influence on my future life. It was preached from the text in St. James, wherein pure religion is described. It seems to me now, that it was a strange text to attract a child of some eight or nine years of age, but I had lived with those much older than myself, and was

accustomed to think as an older person would do. I remember thinking this was the life which I wished to live, without any idea how my thought could be carried out. I am sure I never spoke of what I thought or felt to any one, until many years had passed. My mother was not one to whom I could speak of any interior trouble or interest ; she was not unkind, but she was absorbed in her own sufferings and in care of her health.

If ever man was blessed in a help-meet for him, Mr. Pope surely was. I think he was Welsh ; I know his wife was. They had a large family, but with all her cares she made him her first object, and cheered his somewhat gloomy and despondent temperament. She was goodness itself, and seeing my mother in such poor health, and my father so suffering, she often took my brother and myself home with her for days together, and let us play with her little ones.

It became evident at last that there was no hope of my father's recovery. Everything that the highest medical skill could do was done, and even country nostrums and specialists were tried in vain. He wished to recover, but he wished it only if it was the will of God. His resignation was something sublime. How often have I seen him with the Bible open on a little table before him, and tears coursing down his face, as he read, and comforted himself with the words of his faithful Saviour ! He was subject now to terrible fainting fits, which came on him so suddenly that he was never left alone, and a manservant or some one else was always in his room. Even this did not save him from accidents, and on one occasion he was terribly burned before he could be lifted from the fire into which he had fallen. Still he never murmured.

After this he always tied himself into his chair, and I so well remember the agony it caused me as a child to see him do this. My brother would never go near him, but nothing could keep me from him. Often he would say to me, "My darling, are you not afraid of me?" I was taught truthfulness from the time I could speak, but for once I did not speak the truth. I always protested that I was not afraid, while all the time my little heart was beating with nervous fear of seeing him go off suddenly in one of his deadly faints. I have suffered in later life from the nervous strain of my early days, but I do not regret it. My mother rarely ever saw my father, though at this time they lived in the same house. She was always anxious to live separately from him, and eventually accomplished her desire. Perhaps I should speak of this sad separation at once, or my story will be far too long.

I have spoken of the affection between my father and his step-brothers. This affection was shared by a brother-in-law, whom I have also named, the late Mr. Warren, of Killiney Castle, Dublin.

These dear relatives were determined that neither my father nor mother should suffer in any way from the loss of my father's professional income. They were also anxious that my father and mother should live together. Through their kindness every comfort and even luxury was provided for us, so that we did not feel in any way the pecuniary change of circumstances which otherwise might have been trying, since the private income of my parents was not large. It had been drawn on largely by my father's illness. A plan was now proposed and carried out, that we should reside near Dublin; and a very large house

was taken, where both my father and mother could each have their own apartments and live separately, though under the same roof. This plan did not prove acceptable to my mother, and after a short time it was decided that she should live in England, and that my poor father should be consigned to the care of strangers. I know very little of the affair beyond the facts, as I was far too young to understand the reasons or the circumstances, and I never heard them spoken of in later years. My mother was certainly very delicate. She suffered from serious heart trouble, as well as from chronic asthma ; and no doubt a milder climate, like that of Devonshire, where she decided to live, would have been of considerable benefit to her.

One thing I did know, and realised to the full. My dear father and I were now to be separated, and I supposed that I might never see him again. God alone knows the agony of mind which I suffered. No one else knew. I felt instinctively that my mother would not enter into my feelings, so I never said a word to her. Grannie was to come with us to England, or to follow us there ; that was a great consolation. She was deeply attached to me, and I returned her affection to the full ; but I did not love her as I loved my father, because for him I had a protecting love, as well as the natural love of a child for a good parent.

I remember, as if it were yesterday, the day my father left us. His destination was the family of an episcopal clergyman in the county Dublin, who was glad to add to his income the considerable annual pension paid for my father and his servant. I learned later that he treated my helpless father shamefully, and made his life in every way miserable. When this

came to my knowledge—for my dear father was slow to complain—I was about fifteen, and living with my mother and Grannie in Devonshire. My mother's ill-health and Grannie's advanced age threw much responsibility on me, and made me independent of the opinions of others. I acted for myself, and set off for Ireland alone, having always money at command from Grannie's ever-open purse. It was bad enough to be separated from my father, whom I never ceased to love, but to think that he was not kindly treated was maddening. I went to my uncle Warren, one of the best-hearted men who ever lived, and told him my father must be moved, and that I would go and stay with him for a few months, and see that he was treated properly, if we could find a family to receive him. Our success was beyond all my hopes. A relative of my mother's, Mrs. Talbot, the wife of a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, then living near Wicklow, offered to take charge of my dear father. She was my mother's first cousin, and had known my father, who was beloved by all when he was in practice in Dublin. It was in vain that her friends expostulated with her for taking such a charge with her young family around her. Mr. Talbot was always guided by his Ruth, and well he might be; so she had her husband on her side. Her admiration of my spirit and determination was unbounded, and soon all was happily and blessedly settled; and while my precious father lived I never had a care or anxiety about him. I visited him from time to time, and found that Ruth was child and mother and friend and all to him.

She came to love him as if he had been her own father, and her excellent husband treated him as if

he had been his son. They took care that he should always have an efficient servant, and in fact he wanted for nothing. Although he lived for some years, I may as well conclude his history here, as I have yet so much to say of my own sad life. Whenever I could I went to Ireland to see him, and always found him happy, and often, I might say, rejoicing in the Lord, in a manner which was a marvel to me. The last time I ever saw him I went to tell him of my own, as I then anticipated, approaching marriage ; but he seemed, partly from his disease having somewhat clouded his mind, and partly from his incessant dwelling on heaven, to hardly comprehend anything of this world.

He went home suddenly on an Easter Eve, a fitting day for the release from earth of one whose life had been a long passion of pain. Ruth, dear Ruth, closed his eyes in death ; and surely if ever any one deserved the benedictions of Heaven she did. They have met, as we may well believe, where the blessed neither sin nor suffer more, where those glories which my darling so realised here are known to them now in the fulness of a bliss which, eye not having seen, may never be described by earthly words.

The night is never so long, but at length the morning cometh ; and in the morning we shall go Home.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEGINNINGS OF RITUALISM.

“Labour is life.”—FRANCIS OSGOOD.

“What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?”—2 COR. vi. 16.

AFTER we left Ireland my mother settled in Devonshire, not leaving it again except for one short visit to London. I may say that she lived for some years always a sufferer, and considering the life of trial which she endured she was wonderfully patient. In addition to heart trouble and chronic asthma, she was subject every year to attacks of that mysterious malady, hay fever. She had a sympathiser in her medical attendant, the late Dr. Elliott of Exeter, who was our physician for years, and one of the best friends a girl in my position could have had. I was constantly ill, now with one malady, now with another. It seemed as if the dear Lord intended that my life from the cradle to the grave should be a prolonged suffering. My first recollection of Dr. Elliott, who had so much beneficial influence on my later life, was when he came to attend me in a severe attack of quinsy. I suppose I was then about twelve years of age. He was a man of rare intellectual gifts, and of tender sympathy. His wife was indeed his helpmate, and his children, I believe, have been worthy of their parents, who have long since passed to their reward. Dr. Elliott kept abreast of the times in all matters

of science and general literature, and I was deeply indebted to him for advice*as to reading and study, and for many an interesting discussion, when I grew older, on subjects of mutual interest. I had developed considerable musical talent, which he also encouraged. He was very fond of music, though not himself a performer; but Mrs. Elliott was a splendid musician, and many a pleasant evening we spent in the society of musical friends, and in rehearsing for amateur performances.

I do not think that Dr. Elliott had pronounced religious views, but he was always ready for discussion on such subjects, from a critical or literary point of view. His religion seemed to be, as well as I can judge after the lapse of many years, doing all the good he could for others. My mother needed and received constant attendance from him, and often that attendance was given when he was himself suffering from the very maladies which tried her so severely, for the doctor was also a victim to hay fever and chronic asthma.

My education was principally carried on at home. My dear Grannie had high ideas of education, and fortunately for me I was a willing scholar, and only too glad to take advantage of all the opportunities which she offered me. A very large sum was expended, and I think judiciously, on masters and governesses; for Grannie was careful in her inquiries as to the capabilities of my teachers, and liberal in her ideas of remuneration. Anything that was for my good was her pleasure. Dear Grannie, I seem to see her now! And now I may describe her to you.

I never remember her young. I suppose her lifelong grief for her poor brother—rare as such grief is—must

have aged her prematurely ; but she was advanced in years, certainly, at this time. She had one of the very sweetest faces I ever remember to have seen in a person of her age, and her face was the index of her character. It was almost impossible to make her angry, and to make her believe evil of any one was simply impossible. I remember how I used, in my impulsiveness, to feel almost angry with her when she would excuse some flagrant case of evil doing, or refuse to listen to some story, not to the advantage of another, which I thought needed investigation. She was deeply religious, and her Bible was her one joy and consolation.

It may well be asked how it was, when I was thus surrounded by Christian influences, that I should have been beguiled into Rome. The answer is simple. It was because I did not know what Rome really is, and because my dear Grannie, and many others with whom I associated later in life, were very violent denouncers of Rome ; but they denounced it from a wrong point of view. They were, in fact, as ignorant of what Rome really is as many persons who think she is perfection. It is by no means so easy as people suppose to understand the teaching of Rome, and where the evil comes in. To give one example easily understood, there is the doctrine of the infallibility of the Pope. Many Protestants suppose that the Romanist believes that the Pope cannot commit sin. Now the lives of some of the Popes, not to say of many of them, have been so notoriously evil, that even a Roman Catholic could not defend them. So no Roman Catholic believes or teaches that the Pope cannot sin. Infallibility means something very different and far more dangerous.

I so often heard Grannie and other friends saying that Romanists worshipped the Pope as God, and believed that he could not sin, that I of course believed them ; and naturally, when I found later that this was not the case, I impetuously concluded that all which I had heard against Rome was equally false. It is in consequence of my own painful early experience, the result of being misinformed, that I have so strongly urged on Christian parents and teachers that children and young people should be carefully taught what Rome *does* teach, so that they may be prepared when the time of trial comes, and not find themselves confounded by sophistries which they cannot answer, and thus lured into evil. Impeccability and infallibility are two very different things. If you say to a Roman Catholic that he believes that the Pope cannot sin, he knows you are accusing him falsely, and you gain nothing for the cause of truth. But if you, on the contrary, say he believes the Pope is infallible, you at once face him with a fact which he cannot deny, and the consequences of which are stupendous.

As this is an important matter, I may say that a controversy has been going on in the papers in St. Louis between a Baptist minister and a priest. The Baptist minister got the worst of it, on this point, simply because he was ignorant. He made the common charge against Rome, that she believed that the Pope could not sin. The priest knew that this charge could not be sustained, because it is not a dogma of the Church. He told the Baptist minister that any little Catholic child could tell him that he was wrong. But if this minister had known how to meet the priest on his own ground, and had

asked, "Does not your Church teach to-day that the Pope is infallible? and did not your Church teach twenty years ago that he was not—that the Church was infallible? who gave you the right to make this change?" then the priest could not have answered him. Infallibility is the foundation doctrine of the Romish Church; and if only it is understood as Rome teaches it, there is nothing easier than to show its absurdity, as well as its unscripturalness.

Until the Vatican Council met in the year 1870, the teaching of the Catholic Church was, that the *Church* was infallible. This meant that, when all the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church met, and decided on any subject, there could be no more dispute about it, that every one must believe whatever they decided, on pain of being damned for ever if they did not believe it. For example, it was decided by a Council which met in the year 1854 that the Virgin Mary had been born, or, as the Catholics say, conceived without sin. Every one was obliged to believe this, under pain of eternal damnation, because the "Church" taught it. There was not a word then about the Pope being infallible. But in the year 1870 the Pope got the bishops together to declare that he was infallible, and that the Church was no longer infallible. It has often been a matter of surprise to me that this most absurd proceeding has not been better understood both by Romanists and Protestants. It is quite clear that if the Church was made infallible, as Rome once taught, by Christ Himself, that she had no right to hand over the infallibility to a person, no matter who that person might be. Yet this is just what Rome has done. Of what use, then, is the Church, since it has handed over all its power to the

Pope? What right had the Church to do this? Such are the miserable inconsistencies to which men are driven when they will not abide by the plain teaching of Scripture, and want to be wiser than God.

It so happened that there was considerable discussion about religion always going on in our family. It was not discussion of an acrimonious kind, but, such as it was, it made a very serious and wrong impression on my mind. It is a favourite device of Romanists to try and persuade the young and the ignorant that Protestants "have no religion." In fact, I have heard the ignorant Italian people say that the English, meaning Protestants, are not Christians. They think from what they are taught that Protestants do not believe in God. It may be said that Rome dare not teach such falsehood now. But she does dare to do this, and much more than the world has any idea. All through the vast continent of America the Roman Catholic Church teaches that Protestants have "no religion," and that every Protestant will be damned eternally. In fact, Rome has always taught this; but she conceals her teaching in countries like England, where she knows well she dare not proclaim it openly. If Rome would openly and honestly say what she believes, the world would shrink with horror from her creed; but a false liberality helps her to hide

* Those who desire further information on this important subject, and proof from Roman Catholic sources that the above statements are correct, can find it in a book called "Life inside the Church of Rome," published by Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster Row. Opinions of the press as to the importance of this book are given at the end of this volume. The object of the book is to give a plain exposure of the false teaching of the Roman Catholic Church from the catechisms, etc., authorised by the Pope and Roman Catholic bishops.

evil, and she thus gains a power which otherwise never would be hers.

But Rome is not content with teaching falsely that Protestants have no religion ; she also teaches what is quite as false, but what is, if possible, still more injurious—that Protestants all teach a different creed. She teaches that all the different divisions in the Christian Churches are founded on a wide difference of belief, as if they were each a different religion. This teaching has the most serious results, as all false teaching must have. It leads ignorant persons to think that Protestants are so divided in their belief that it is only the Church of Rome which has always taught the same faith. Nothing could be more absurd ; but the poor, or the rich Romanist for that part of the matter, must believe whatever the Church teaches, and he must not inquire for himself whether what the Church teaches is true or false.

Now I was deceived by this very specious argument of the Roman Catholic Church. I never reflected that the different bodies of Protestants all believe in the same plan of salvation. There is not one Protestant Church which looks to any other Saviour but Christ, or to any other means of salvation except through His precious blood. They may differ as to details of Church government, or as to expression in the definition of religious belief, but in the one and only fundamental doctrine of the Christian Church the Christian denominations are all one, and Romanists know it well, though they teach their people that it is not so.

I had no one when I was young to point out all this to me ; hence my mind became confused, and not having truth placed before me clearly I was easily

led into error. My father, of course, could not influence my religious opinions. He was a member of the Episcopal Church, and remained so all his life. My mother had no very fixed religious opinions, and in fact, she was quite unable for many years to attend any public service. My aunt changed her opinions very often, and for some years before her death belonged to the Plymouth Brethren, who were at the time of which I write an influential body in Devonshire. As for myself, I generally went to the Episcopal church and to a chapel-of-ease in Exeter, which was served always by evangelical clergymen. I, however, had a great love for the cathedral service, I think principally from my love of music.

Some one will wish to know when I first began my career of authorship, which has been a life-long work. Perhaps if I said how very young I was when I made my first attempt in that direction it would be scarcely credited. I know that I was hardly able to write in print when I rushed, as all juvenile authors do, into verse, and wrote a valedictory poem to a very dear cousin from whom I was parting. She had, I believe, a local repute as an author, and I, as a child, with, I suppose, unconscious aspirations in that direction, looked up to her with adoring admiration. She was a Miss Lyster, and a cousin of my mother's. I remember her appearance distinctly, and her pleasure when I presented her with my offering of verse, which I am sure must have been of the very crudest description. This was before we left Ireland, so I was indeed a juvenile poet. I gained great facility in writing—which has served me in good stead all my life—by having spent much of my leisure time when young in writing analyses and compendiums of nearly every book which I read.

I was indebted to Dr. Elliott also for this valuable practice. He was himself a great reader. Every new book on science or general literature was purchased by him as soon as it was announced; and curious indeed was the selection of my early reading. Novels were not as plentiful then as now; but on the other hand, there was no "higher education," at least for girls. Colleges for women were unheard of, and the state of affairs some forty years ago was such as would have satisfied the most ardent advocate of the retirement of the female sex. Yet even then the beginning of a new era was dawning, and the dawn gave indications of the future, if only men had read aright. Miss Sewell's religious novels were doing their work. Miss Yonge's contributions, too,—shall I say amusing or instructive literature?—had been inaugurated, and gave promise of what they eventually became, being a power in the formation of public opinion. It may indeed be doubted whether Miss Yonge's religious novels or Keble's "Christian Year" contributed most to the "conversions" to Rome which began soon after the period of which I write. There is no question that both engendered a certain condition of thought which predisposed to receive Rome on a false presentation of her real condition. Everything which was attractive to sight and sense in Romanism,—and none can deny that Rome, above all, relies on sight and sense,—was brought before the world by those who were never suspected of working for Rome, and everything which was evil was glossed over or practically explained away.

I do not remember that I was ever restrained in my reading by any one from the time I was a child. I knew that my dear Grannie considered it wrong to

read novels, or to frequent theatres ; but I cared very little for novels, and my health prevented my attending public amusements even if I desired to do so.

I can remember many of the books I read, and I kept until lately some of the large manuscript books, in which I had a record of my studies. Works of science and history were my favourites, and later the High Church religious novel ; and most fascinating and dangerous reading they were for the young. I read all the Bridgewater treatises as they came out, the once famous " Vestiges of Creation," Hugh Miller's works, what was then published of Carlyle,—though I never admired his style,—and, of course, all the standard poets and historians, ancient and modern. I also read and took a very great interest in a class of reading, which certainly was an unusual study for a girl of my age.

I believe it was at the recommendation of Dr. Elliott that I procured Clarendon's " History of the Great Rebellion" and books of a kindred character. My confirmation as a member of the Episcopal Church, for which I arranged myself, I think rather to the surprise of the clergyman, led me to read Hooker and other works of this class.

I know that I was never idle, and that I read so much and so rapidly that it was a joke against me that I began to read a book at the end. My brother was very little with me, either then or later. He was at school, and later at college ; but when we were together our literary tastes were so similar that it was a happy time for us both. I studied Latin with his tutor, which I found a great advantage later in life ; but I regret to say I did not study German, though I had special facilities for doing so. At that time

German was not a fashionable study. I had, however, special advantages in the study of French and Italian, of which I availed myself fully.

I was sent for a short time to a fashionable boarding school near Exeter, but I learned very little there. The method of teaching was good as far as it went, but it was restricted, as education was generally at that time. The school, or, as it would now be called, the college, for young ladies, was conducted by a Mrs. Ashworth, an excellent lady, who was assisted by her daughter and by her sister. I remember, with pain, that the girls were extremely irreverent in the matter of Scripture lessons, which were taught in the most perfunctory way. This was another stumblingblock in my way later. I often saw some of the girls throw the Bible from one end of the large schoolroom to another, and declare themselves utterly weary of the very name. This arose from the custom of obliging the girls to learn whole chapters of the Bible off by heart, and requiring the most accurate repetition of long portions, and even of whole books of the Bible, in this way.

I remember having a great reluctance to receiving Communion after I left school. It was considered the "right thing" to do; and my mother for once asserted herself, and spoke to me on the subject. As I still refused,—I think from a feeling of respect for what I supposed to be a holy duty, for which I thought I was not good enough,—she asked some friend to try and influence me, and eventually I complied with her wishes. And here, again, I found a cause of difficulty. The clergyman who ministered at the Evangelical chapel-of-ease, of which I have spoken, was very careless, to say the least, at the

services of the Church. I had absolutely no one to tell me what was, or was not, the teaching of the Episcopal Church on the subject of the Sacraments, but it was not long before I got information enough, such as it was.

The present generation probably may have almost forgotten the once famous surplice riots in Exeter, or the equally famous Gorham case. I should say, first, that about this time we had a long visit from a brother of my mother's, the Rev. W. B. Stoney, for many years rector of Castlebar, in Ireland. I believe my uncle was a Christian, but he certainly was a very aggressive one ; and the result was not beneficial either to me or to some members of his own family. He saw at once the danger which was arising in the Church of England from the introduction of forms, and the revival of ceremonies, which were not in harmony with the teaching of the Reformers. If, he argued, the Church had abandoned Romanism, why try to restore symbols and ceremonies which had also been abandoned, because they were associated with certain Roman Catholic teachings? But there are two ways of carrying out a reform, either of Churches or of individuals. There is the way of violence, and the way of patience. The way of violence is, no doubt, more in harmony with some characters than with others. It is often more agreeable to human nature than the slower and surer process of grace, which seeks to win by waiting. My uncle was a gifted man, but most assuredly his most devoted friends could not have called him a patient man. He and his friend Mr. Nangle, of Achil, tried to reform Rome in Ireland by short and, as they supposed, easy methods of violence, but they made a sad failure

of the whole business. Opposition seldom effects real conversion. Persuasion, if it is accompanied by the grace of God asked in earnest prayer, seldom fails.

Mr. Stoney had come to spend the winter with us, as his health had failed, from hard work in his troublesome parish. At least, if his zeal was not of the wisest, he never spared himself in its exercise. Exeter was wild with the "No Popery cry," which was indeed heard elsewhere in old England at this period. Would to God that it had been better understood ! For the most part, those who were most active in uttering the cry simply opposed the popish innovations which had begun in the Church because they were innovations, and the Englishman is naturally conservative. There were a few who saw what the outcome of all this new ceremonial would be ; but they were few. England was in a transition state. The old Evangelical party were dying out, and had ceased to be a power. A friend wrote to me before I left America : "They are as dead to-day as the extinct dodo." In one sense this is true ; but the spirit is not dead, nor can it ever die as long as there are men and women who love the pure Gospel of Christ. Young, eager minds like my own were looking on, and taking part in all this religious fray, with an intensity of purpose which would scarcely be imagined to-day. We had, most of us, been brought up to believe, passively at least, that there could not be any change in our Church ; that the Church of England was as safe as it was respectable. Why, then, should we concern ourselves ? It was partly an amazement to us and partly an amusement, to find that there could be change, and that the Reformed Church was supposed to need a reform

which this time should be a reform backwards. We were to go back to ancient things and to ancient teachings, and were to study the "Fathers." How could we know that the same "Fathers" seldom agreed amongst themselves; that they quarrelled as acrimoniously as we were quarrelling then; and that the only place where we could find truth about which there could be no dispute was in the Bible, which was at least the Book of the Christian before the Fathers began to dispute its teaching, and to quibble or quarrel over the meaning of texts, which were only perplexing because each wished to interpret them according to his own view of truth?

To those who thought or realised how things were tending, it was evident that the Sacramental question was the question of the hour. And this has proved to be the case. We had first the burning question about Baptism: Was the child, so utterly unconscious of what was being done for it, by that act—of which it knew nothing—made a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven? This was the sacramental theory, with all its attendant and grave evils. The priest became necessary to man as the medium between him and God, who has said there is but one Mediator. As an inevitable consequence of this newly claimed power of the priesthood, the office was exalted. It should be surrounded by the pomp and circumstance of a quasi-Divine royalty. The priest was a character too sacred for the common herd. Men began to make gods for themselves, so prone is poor humanity to approach his Maker in every way save the one which his Maker has appointed.

The plan of salvation, according to Scripture, is too

simple for the exalted genius of humanity. Man must be wiser than the God who made him, and know better how to save himself than the God who died to save him.

Scripture tells us that there is one "High-priest," who has entered *once for all* into the Holy of Holies for us, and that He "needeth not daily to offer sacrifice," for this He did once when He offered up Himself (Heb. vii. 9). Further, we are told that He is able "to save to the uttermost." What more can we ask? But still human nature craves for something which it can see, and something which it can do. It must all the time have its golden calf, and offer incense to its own manufactures.

Into the dispute on the subject of baptismal regeneration I cannot enter here. It would require, in view of subsequent developments, to be treated at great length, if entered upon in anything like a satisfactory manner. But as I was one, however humble, of thousands who were affected by this controversy, and who are to this day affected by it, I cannot pass over the subject altogether.

The dispute, putting aside technicalities and theological antiquarian disquisitions, was simply this: Were we to look for salvation through the Church as the divinely appointed medium of salvation, or were we to look for a personal salvation, by going direct to the Saviour? Look at it as you will, this is the simple difference between Gospel teaching and the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and its unacknowledged, but would-be sister, Ritualism. Rome and Ritualism teach the same thing. You cannot approach Christ yourself; you must go to Him through a creature like yourself. It is true what

Scripture teaches in plainest language, that you should go direct to Christ, but Scripture is not your guide, unless as interpreted by the Church. You must ask the Church to tell you what Christ meant even when He used the plainest words.

The surplice question was simply an effort, on the part of those who believed that mankind should be saved through the ministrations of a priest, to exalt the character of the priest. He must live apart from his fellow as something sacred. There were hints, even then, of the duty of the priest to observe celibacy. But it was noteworthy that men advocated this beautiful theory for others, and greatly admired those who followed the advice which they so freely gave on this subject, while they found so many reasons for not acting on their own principles. Keble was married, and Manning was married, and Pusey was married ; but they all said how very much better it was to abstain from marriage. It is perhaps the best argument against Ritualism, that it has never carried out its own principles in this respect. Rome, wiser, has not left the matter to the taste of individuals, but has forbidden marriage to all her priests, albeit that her supposed founder, St. Peter, had a wife.

Those who see to-day how quietly Ritualism clothes herself in the garb of Rome, cannot even imagine all the struggles which the earlier Ritualist had to obtain even the permission from the public, or ecclesiastical superiors, to wear a surplice. In this day of albs and vestments, of altars and recessionals, of confessionals and processions, of incense and altar breads, who could believe that even to have an early communion service was considered, as it certainly

was, an approach to Rome. Yet all these changes are of modern development, and have taken place within living memory. The French say truly : "*C'est le premier pas qui coûte.*" The first step Romewards cost those who made it far more than might have been supposed.

I believe the Rev. W. Courteney, of St. Sidwell's Church, Exeter, was the first who had the courage of his opinions in the matter of what later came to be called ecclesiastical millinery. He wore the surplice in the pulpit, but he wore it in a state of chronic storm. I remember one of many occasions on which he did this daring deed. The church was filled with a mob who hooted and cried "No popery," who had but little idea of what popery was, except that it was un-English, which it most certainly is. The walls of the old city were covered with placards of "No popery," and "No wafer-god"; but, all the same, to-day the wafer is reserved in the English Episcopal Church, and worshipped as it is in Rome, though the Articles of the Church have called the mass a damnable idolatry.

I was soon to have an example of the way in which religious feud was to divide families. My uncle had brought his eldest daughter with him. She was older than I was, but not so much older as to prevent a close friendship between us which exists to this day. F—— was very much taken with the exterior show of the Ritualist party, and, like all young and impressionable girls, thought she knew better than those who were older than she was. She was, I think, attracted only by the exterior of Ritualism; I was attracted by the promise which came later of a higher life. The result was what might have been predicted,

if any of us had known enough to predict. She never left the Protestant Church, contenting herself with ceremonies and the exterior of an imitation Romanism. I went further, and would try all that was promised in the way of high spirituality ; and learned, to my infinite grief, that I had been cruelly deceived.

F—— brought home a Prayer Book one day, which was adorned with a massive cross, and laid it on the drawing-room table. How vividly the whole scene comes before me now ! It was in winter, though I cannot remember year or date ; circumstances have always fixed themselves on my memory when dates have utterly failed me. My uncle was sitting by the fire, to all appearance half asleep ; but he was a man who seldom slept in this fashion. He quietly took up the Prayer Book, took out his sharp pen-knife, tore off the cross, and flung it in the fire, and then threw the mutilated book to the other end of the room.

He never said a word, but his action was enough. My cousin remained silent ; but when her father left the room soon after she took the Prayer Book away with her, and we never saw her use it after or replace it.

I can only say that the whole scene made a most unfortunate impression on my mind. If my uncle, to whom I was very much attached, had taken the opportunity to have explained to me at least why he acted thus, or if, instead of this violence, he had used gentle expostulation and careful explanation, perhaps my course in life might have been very different. I had not then formed any attachment for Ritualism ; indeed, I never was a Ritualist, for I entered the Roman Catholic Church from a Protestant

sisterhood, where I was shut out from all intelligent knowledge of controversy quite as much as I could have been in a Roman Catholic convent. But I always abhorred violence, and it seemed to me that violence was as objectionable on one side as on the other.

CHAPTER IV.

A SHATTERED HOPE.

“O for the touch of a vanish’d hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !”—LONGFELLOW.

“And he was not, for God took him.”—GEN. v. 24.

I NOW come to a part of my life’s history which I would thankfully pass by in silence, but I feel it would be an injustice to the reader if I did so, since the consequences of what I have to record so completely changed the whole course of my life. As a young girl, I believe I thought less of love or marriage than others of my age. I had too many sources of anxiety in the present to think much of the future. I was also very much interested, as will have been understood, in scientific pursuits, and in general literature. I had already promised myself a career as an author. Several little tales which I had written had been accepted and published in religious magazines. I was not remunerated for them, but this concerned me very little, for I never needed money, and I had only to express a wish for anything, no matter how costly, to find that Grannie was about to give it to me, having generally anticipated my desires ; which, however, I must say, in justice to myself, were moderate.

But now a new interest had entered into my life,

and I knew what it was to care for one who was in every way worthy of my love. Charlie H—— was the friend and dear companion of my brother's early years. As he was older than my brother, my dear mother had asked him to give that protection to my brother at the Exeter Grammar School which was not unnecessary ; and he well fulfilled his charge. I did not know, until he told me himself much later, that he had loved me from the first hour he had seen me as a child. He must have had a rare gift of patience, for he did not speak until we were both quite grown up, and until he saw that I only looked on him as a friend, and was of an age when some one else might win what he had so long desired for his own.

My brother also became engaged to his sister. We had always been attached to the family ; and, indeed, I thought as much of his home as I did of my own. From my peculiar circumstances, I certainly looked on marriage as a relief from much that was very trying in my life. My mother, with increasing years and increasing sufferings, had become a little peculiar in her feelings, and did not care to have me with her. Grannie found that my allegiance was necessarily divided between my mother, my father, and herself. She was not in a state of health to be left always to the care of servants, and she had always been accustomed to the society of members of her own family, and to have a cheerful home circle round her. She could not bear to have me absent from her, no matter what necessity there might have been for my being with others, and, altogether, my position was a very painful one. Soon after my engagement I was needed by my father, and as I thought I might not see him

as often as I wished after my marriage, I decided to go to Ireland once more.

I travelled alone, as usual, and parted with my dear one at the station in Exeter, with many promises of a speedy return and of many letters during my absence. How little I thought that I should indeed go to him, but that he would never again come to me ! How little I thought that our next meeting would be where there is no parting ; that I should never see his face again on earth !

Nothing seemed less likely than that he should die. He was a very handsome man, in the full vigour of youth and health. We were, our friends said, a happy contrast to each other. He was fair, I was dark ; his eyes were bright, clear and keen, and for a man he had an unusually fresh colour. I parted from him somewhat sadly, but the trials of my early life had taken from me, even then, the usual elasticity of youth. Certainly I never anticipated the sad future ; yet I well remember even the very spot on which I stood in a fair Devonshire lane, and said to his favourite sister, who was always my friend, " I know that Charlie and I will never be married." I had no reason whatever for this presentiment, but most assuredly I had the presentiment, and expressed it. She smiled at my fears, but she could not remove them.

We parted. We shall meet again within the golden gates. I went on my way, and, of course, the news of my approaching marriage had preceded me, and I was met with the usual felicitations and pleasant raillery. I stayed a few days with my uncle, Mr. Warren, at Killiney Castle, and then went on to my father. I found him failing fast. The disease, which had now

come to its full development, had almost deprived him of all interest in outside things. He knew me well, and seemed pleased to see me. He said I was too young to marry, evidently thinking that I was still a child. I found I could be of little use to him, and that he was most tenderly cared for by my cousin Ruth and her good husband. In fact, he was made so one with them, that it had become a real home to him.

I was asked to go from there to visit other relatives, and I went. It was in the pleasant summer time, when poor Ireland is at its fairest and best. The friends to whom I was going were the successors of the Mr. Baker who was so cruelly murdered. Mr. Baker had not any children, and the property passed, at his death, to a nephew, now also dead, but then living and married. Hugh Baker and his wife had spent some time with us in Exeter during the previous winter, and I had "taken" to my hitherto unknown cousins, as they had also to me. Their eldest daughter, since twice married and twice widowed, was a warm ally of mine, not much younger than myself. There was no reason why I should not visit Lismacue (the house of Hugh), and I went there to meet my sorrow, the sorrow which left me truly "a widow and desolate." It was the Sunday morning after my arrival; it was a fair day, sweet and bright, a day for the bridal of earth and heaven. My cousins, both Christians, were advising me not to think of the long country drive to church, when Hugh was called from the room. But what need to say more? A letter had been sent to him by a special messenger—for it was not the day of telegrams—to ask him to break to me, as gently as possible, the fatal news that my darling

was dead. His wife Marion was called from my room, where I was resting, and laughing at my lazy ways, and I knew something must be wrong. I thought, perhaps, it was some agrarian difficulty, for it was a place to dread.

How the fatal news was broken to me I know not. It was with the greatest difficulty I could be made to understand that it was not a question of illness, but of death. I had not heard of even a preceding illness to break the fatal shock ; in fact, the illness had been only a matter of hours. When I was made to realise at last the terrible truth that I was bereaved and desolate, that the one little spark of brightness which had come into my sorrowful life was for ever quenched, I fell into a blessed state of unconsciousness, from which I often asked why was I recalled.

The next morning's post brought word that my brother was coming over for me, and that Grannie had her arms and her heart open to receive and comfort me. But there was no comfort for me. I should go to him, but he could not return to me. I saw before me a long life of hopeless, desolate sorrow, though I little thought that my life would have been what it has been. I believe I was resigned to the will of God—at least, I know that I tried to be resigned—but that could not remove my desolation. My brother took me home to Grannie tenderly and lovingly. He was always a good brother to me, and in this case he also lost a friend to whom he was devotedly attached, so that we suffered together. My brother feared for my life at first, for I absolutely refused to touch food. It was not that I did not want to eat, but that I could not. After I had been for twenty-four hours without touching any kind of nourishment, he went himself

and melted jelly of the strongest kind he could get, and held it to my lips with tears and caresses, until I had swallowed a little ; and his tenderness soothed me.

My darling is laid in the sunny southern slope of a churchyard in Devonshire. My Grannie lies there too. My mother is there. The dear father and mother of my friend are also laid to rest in the same place, waiting the resurrection. Do you wonder that I cannot bear to think of visiting a place hallowed by such memories, and that I lingered in another land instead of returning to England when I left the convent, lest I should meet with pleadings, which I knew it would be hard to resist, to visit a place which is to me a Gethsemane ?

For two years my life was despaired of. I was attended by the same Dr. Elliott of whom I have spoken before. I was fortunate in having a maid who was devoted to me, and in having the dear Grannie to pour out on me all the wealth of her love ; and she was indeed a being of love and to be loved. But nothing could recall the dead. I lay in a darkened room for months, for it seemed to me as if even the sunlight was too glad. I scarcely spoke, and I wept until it was a marvel that the fountain of my tears was not dried up for ever.

After a time Grannie took me to Torquay, a place which I had always liked, and which I could revisit once more with pleasure. As all grief must eventually wear itself out, if it does not wear out those who are afflicted, I became at least a little less sorrowful, and my health gave some signs of improvement.

On our return to Exeter I went to my mother for a little while, at her request. My dear father had died in the meantime, and I think this recalled the

past to her, and in some way made her wish to have me with her. It was while I was visiting my mother that I met friends whose influence changed my whole life. Lord and Lady F—— had come to Devonshire for the health of an only daughter, and also for the benefit of Lady F——'s health. She was a most charming woman, long past her first youth, but with a tender heart, and a great tenderness for those in sorrow. Her own life had been one of great trial, so that we sympathised with each other. Her delicate health prevented her from going into society ; and as I was in the same position, though she was so much older than myself, we formed a friendship which was a mutual pleasure. It was at Lady F——'s house I first met Dr. Pusey.

When I had somewhat recovered from the first effects of the crushing blow which had for ever darkened my life, I naturally returned to my old literary pursuits. I also began to interest myself again in charitable objects. I should perhaps have said earlier in this narrative that I had always taken a great interest in the condition of the poor. In fact, after my engagement, I often playfully reproached Charlie because he had not followed the example of his father and entered the Church. If ever I thought of marriage before my engagement to him, it was with the wish that I might be the wife of a clergyman, because of the opportunities which such a life would offer to benefit others, and to work for the poor. I had never forgotten the text on which I had heard a sermon preached on the life which a Christian should lead—"to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction." "Do you suppose," my friend would say, "that I will ever hinder you from working for the poor? Look at my mother ;" and indeed his

mother, whom I so longed also to call mine, for I had the deepest reverence for her life of devotion to every good work, spent her time in labours of love, and was a sister, in the best and highest sense of the word, to all who were in trouble. My mother never hindered me in doing good, though she often made my inclination in that direction a subject of good-natured raillery. The word "slums" was not then invented ; but she would ask what pleasure I could find in going into the back lanes and byways. Grannie would have helped personally in any good work for others, but her age incapacitated her from any personal service for the poor. But her heart was ever open to every call of charity, and she encouraged me in every way to do the work for which I seemed to have a natural disposition.

After my bereavement I turned to religious rather than to scientific literature ; and it so happened that I was lent the sermons of Dr. Newman and of the then Archdeacon Manning. The latter I greatly preferred. I also read "The Christian Year" and such books ; in fact, all the literature which came into my hands at this time was of the description usually known then as "High Church." All this predisposed me for what was to follow. I further became acquainted with a member of the Oxenham family, and we were very much together. This lady was a good deal older than I was, and, like Lady F——, impressed me as an older person does one who is younger, if there is any similarity of taste. Miss Oxenham was very anxious to join a sisterhood, but could not do so while her mother lived ; but she was a "penitent" of Dr. Pusey's, and spoke of him in the terms of elaborate eulogy which seem to have

been customary with those to whom he acted as a spiritual father.

It seemed to me that the life of a sister would just suit me. I knew that my mother did not need me. I felt painfully that Grannie and I were drifting apart, partly because the relatives whom she invited to be with her had evidently made up their minds to remain, and to keep me as much apart from her as possible, partly because we had begun to differ for the first time on the subject of religion.

Again, circumstances were such as to have placed me at a serious disadvantage. Grannie's views of Rome were in the main perfectly correct, but she had formed true conclusions on false premises ; and as I could see that she was mistaken on points which I understood, I naturally concluded that she was a victim to prejudice, and therefore could not be a safe guide for me.

But, in truth, I concerned myself at this time very little as to opinions of this or that kind about religion. I wanted quiet, to be out of the world, and to be where I could devote myself to the work which I had always liked. I had worn all but a widow's mourning since the death of my friend, and I did not like to change, yet I did not wish to appear singular. It was suggested to me that if I saw Dr. Pusey he would tell me something about the life of a "sister," and find me a place in a sisterhood. I had a romantic idea of a sister's life ; but I do not think I expected more than I had a right to expect from women who devoted themselves to such a high calling as they declared it to be. If one should expect perfection, or anything like it, surely it should be where such high aims and practice was the rule. At last it was

whispered with bated breath that Dr. Pusey was coming to Exeter on his usual confessional tour.

If I had known a little more I should not have been so easily deceived. How could I know that, with all his high teaching on the subject of authority, he obeyed no authority but his own? Those who went to confession to him did it in open defiance of their ecclesiastical superiors. Dr. Pusey, good and great as he was in other respects, was certainly what men of the world would have called dishonourable in his practices of piety. I know the veneration and respect in which his memory is held, and for many reasons not without justice. But the facts which I have to relate, and which are well known to many, are not such as to increase respect for his moral character. He simply did what Rome does, and the nearer he went to Rome the more he was obliged to copy her moral theology. He let expediency be the rule of his life, instead of honesty. He was dishonest with himself. If others had acted as he did he would have been the first to denounce them; but his zeal for what he believed to be truth led him into the most grievous moral error. The whole subject is one of great importance; and as it is closely connected with my personal history, I may be allowed to dwell on it a little.

The position which Dr. Pusey took was certainly unique, and at least indicated considerable reliance on his own judgment. He proposed to reform two Churches. He tried to reform (we use the word advisedly) the Episcopal Church, by bringing it back halfway to Rome; he proposed to correct what he conceived to be the errors of the Church of Rome, by taking from it what he did not approve. A

herculean task truly! He made no secret of his desire to reform Rome according to his lights. He published a number of Roman Catholic books, which he "revised" according to his view of what he considered right. He said in the preface to one of these books, that no doubt the saints who wrote them would be obliged to him for the trouble which he had taken to revise their labours.

In other words, he calmly claimed that he knew better than they did, and that what he declared to be truth on earth was truth in heaven.

Now besides the moral obliquity involved in this proceeding, there was another, and a very serious evil. We who used these books were kept in entire ignorance of the evils which had been eliminated from them. Dr. Pusey knew what Rome taught; we did not, for we were only allowed to know what Dr. Pusey thought fit.

This was a very serious matter. Many of us became Romanists eventually on Dr. Pusey's representation of what Rome was, which was something very different, as many of us learned later, to what Rome really is. Take, for example, the Roman doctrine of the mediatorship of the Virgin Mary. We were kept in complete ignorance of what Rome taught, and taught authoritatively on that point. Rome has a complete system of censorship of books, as well as of censorship of everything else. No book of devotion can be published without the permission of the Inquisition, which still exists, openly, and by name, though a sometimes confiding public believe it has long since passed away. Now all these books which Dr. Pusey revised for the use of his followers had been previously revised and authorised by Rome

for the use of her followers. Rome is infallible ; she cannot change. And here we had the spectacle of a man who was altogether out of harmony, and often violating the regulations of his own Church, who took upon him to revise the revisions of Rome ; and what was by far the greatest evil, he deliberately deceived those who confided in him, with a trust which almost amounted to worship. He set himself up as a guide on every point of faith and morals, and he commenced by failing himself on a point of the gravest moral importance. What authority had Dr. Pusey, human or Divine, to put himself above popes and prelates, and to constitute himself the only true guide for all the world ? Practically this was the outcome of all his actions and of all his teachings.

I was often asked how it was that I, who had been brought up in the full light of the Gospel, and with an open Bible, could have joined a Church which teaches what Rome does. Now one of the difficulties which I have had hitherto in explaining such matters is this : I have found that there are many persons who will ask questions who will not wait for a reply, or who, when they do wait for a reply, will not give it an intelligent consideration. I believe and hope that those who read this narrative are of a very different class.

While a great deal of harm has been done by the suppression of Roman Catholic teaching in books of devotion published by Dr. Pusey and the Ritualists, a great deal of harm has been done also by misstatements of what Rome does teach, and by those who have undertaken to enlighten the Protestant public, who either, through want of education, or because sensationalism pays, have made statements which are not true.

I have given above an instance of the kind of misstatements which are the cause of so much injury. But unquestionably the suppression of truth of which Dr. Pusey was guilty was far worse, for it kept those in ignorance who had no other means of knowledge.

It must always be remembered in controversy with Rome that Rome holds much Christian truth. It is what Rome has added to the truths of the Gospel which has practically made her teaching another Gospel. If you want to convert an enemy, you must give him credit for all the good you can ; it is both wise and Christian to do so.

I, then, and others were allowed by Dr. Pusey to know all that was good in Rome, and all the evil was carefully hidden from us. There is much that is attractive in Rome to human nature. There is much that is attractive to those who desire, according to their lights, to live a higher spiritual life. Hence the immense importance of informing the young, especially, of the specious character of Roman Catholic teaching.

There is something attractive in the idea of absolute unity of teaching. I must confess that this idea had the greatest fascination for me. But it was a fascination of ignorance, an illusion, very beautiful if it had only been true. I did not know that Rome had been rent over and over again with disputes on doctrinal points of the most serious importance, and that the boasted unity of Rome was the unity of slaves under the lash of a taskmaster, who commanded silence under pain of death. It is very easy for Rome to put forward an appearance of unity of doctrine when the fate of every one who differed from her was death, when she had the power to inflict it. Now that she has not

the power to enforce her authorised teaching on this point, she goes as far as she can to effect their temporal injury, and announces their eternal damnation with no uncertain sound.

I did not realise then that every Protestant denomination is one in the unity of Christ, as Rome never has been, and never can be. I did not realise, because my attention had not been called to that point as it should have been, that the unity of the Christian Church is found in its acceptance of salvation through Christ, and through Christ alone. Hence I fell easily into the snare. May I say that the good which was in me was also in some sort my temptation, for I was fascinated by the beauty of the idea of being the spouse of Christ, as Rome teaches that every sister becomes? I did not realise that every Christian is as truly the spouse of Christ as if she was individually dedicated to Him. I did not know, until an unhappy experience taught me, that those who are called the spouses of Christ are very far from being real imitators of His hidden life, and that living in a cloister does not remove temptation, or give increased ability to meet it when it comes.

My first interview with Dr. Pusey decided me to enter a Protestant sisterhood, and to do so without delay. I had no one to consult; I had some little independent means and the certainty of more, as whatever property my father and mother possessed was under marriage settlement to be divided between myself and my brother. Dr. Pusey, as usual in such cases, advised me not to mention my plan to any one.

I have said already that my mother really did not need me, that the strong ties which had bound me to the dear Grannie to whom I owed so much had

been strangely loosened. It seemed to me as if Providence, in taking away from me all hope of an earthly home, had called me to give up my life to the service of others. At that time there were none of the Christian activities at work which are now so happily in existence. I did not know what to do with my life, and I did what I honestly believed to be the will of God.

I had a romantic idea of a sister's life, as almost every one has who enters a convent ; and there is no romance so fascinating as a religious romance. My reading had fostered this. In Milmans "Martyr of Antioch," a book much read then, but well-nigh forgotten now, I had mused over the description of Margaret, of whom he wrote :—

"Nor nightly dream, nor daily thought, removed
From Him, who is the sun to that pale flower,
The Virgin's heart."

Tennyson's "St. Agnes' Eve," was another source of consolation and witchery to me. I have often wondered if he knows for how many religious "vocations" he is responsible.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN A PROTESTANT SISTERHOOD.

“Oh, shattered idols, framed of fragile glass
We thought were jewels !”

MONRO.

“I will that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house.”—I TIM. v. 14.

BY Dr. Pusey's advice I went to Teignmouth, ostensibly on a visit to friends, really to make my escape quietly, not from a convent, but to a convent. At that time Dr. Pusey found great difficulty in getting ladies to enter sisterhoods. The idea was new. While there were some girls with sufficient romance or sufficient piety to enter these institutions, he had to meet the difficulty of objections from parents. They might be very “advanced” Churchmen ; they might encourage their friends to confess to the Doctor, and give them every facility to do so ; but when it came to going to confession themselves, or allowing their wives or daughters to do so, or to enter a convent, *pas si bête* was the cry.

I knew many cases where every effort was made to help other people's children to follow Dr. Pusey's advice, but where a stern refusal was given when fathers were asked to give their own daughters. I knew one notable case where the wife of a gentleman, who was supposed to be a very pillar of advanced church-

manship, most positively refused the tearful entreaties of his wife, year after year, to allow her to confess to Dr. Pusey. It was notable that no matter what the Doctor thought or said about the necessity of availing oneself of the "sacrament," he was very careful to whom he administered it. Further, it was well known that he administered the sacrament of confession, for the most part, in open defiance of the bishop of the diocese, where he met his penitents, literally, "on the sly." I believe that the secrecy, and concealment, and devices which had to be used to get an audience with the Doctor, for the purpose of confessing, had a little, if it had not a good deal, to do with his success. The lady (few men went to confession) who availed herself of the privilege, or who could obtain it, was looked upon with more or less holy envy, and felt correspondingly elated.

The Rev. T. Galton was at that time the Rector of Sidwells, to which parish I belonged. He was ready to hear confessions, and felt not a little hurt that those who should have come to him, according to the Rubrics of the Church, to "open their griefs," went to Dr. Pusey.

I was often asked, after I became a Romanist, if there were any hope of Dr. Pusey's conversion. I invariably gave the same answer: "Dr. Pusey is far too sure of his personal infallibility to submit to any other infallibility."

At length the day came when I was to enter the sisterhood. Dr. Pusey had been very anxious that I should join the one established by Miss Scillon at Plymouth, but I had heard rumours that all was not peace, even in that abode where peace was supposed to reign supreme, so I decided to join the sisterhood at

Osnaburgh Street. How well I can recall all the circumstances of my journey to London, and of my arrival at what I hoped would be my home for life ! I had not told any one of my intention, and I do not remember now to whom I wrote to notify my arrival in London. I found in Miss Langston, the superior-ess of the institution, a lady of great refinement and goodness. Her very countenance indicated benevolence, but, like many who are benevolent, and, I had almost said, nothing more, she was wanting in that strength of character so essential for a person in her position. However, I was in no mood to criticise then. I had come expecting to find a home of Christian work and Christian peace. There were just four sisters besides the superioress. One, known as Sister Jane, to whom I became much attached later, was in extremely delicate health ; in fact, will-power alone kept her in any kind of active service. I believe she was the daughter of a Devonshire clergyman, and that her family had objected strongly to her having joined the sisters, but had at last yielded under pressure from Dr. Pusey. She was a woman of education and refinement, but somewhat self-assertive, and a continual thorn in the side of poor Miss Langston. In fact, I found later that a superioress had to be either a slave or a tyrant ; and that as tyranny was frequently the easiest solution of many difficulties, most superioresses concluded, more or less deliberately, to be tyrants.

Sister Etheldreda was the next in order. I never knew exactly who her family were (there was the most ridiculous secrecy in all such matters), but she was certainly a lady—a bright, gay, in the best sense of the word, bit of sunshine in the house, and yet I

think she suffered physically a great deal. It was whispered that she helped "Father," as Dr. Pusey was called, in his translations ; but everything was made a mystery, and I was far too sad at heart and indifferent to care to make investigations which, I have no doubt, would have proved amusing, even if they had not been profitable.

The third was named Sister Anne. She was from Scotland, and unmistakably Scotch. We became great friends also. Indeed, I was friends with all, though I could see that there was much jealousy, and too often ill-feeling, between these sisters.

I had almost forgotten one more—Sister Eliza. She was one of the most active and useful in the little community. She had charge of the orphans, and was very seldom absent from her post. Of her history I knew nothing.

Dr. Pusey knew that my health was so delicate that I was unfit for work, and I must say I was treated with the kindest consideration. I took a class in the schools now and then, and this was all I could do, except to help Sister Jane with the exquisite Church work which she had constantly on hand. She let drop many little hints as to the state of affairs, with which she was far from being satisfied, but above all she warned me against Miss Sellon, and not without cause. Her description of the Plymouth Sisterhood was that it was a "hell upon earth," and later I knew, from personal experience, that she was not far astray.

Miss Langston became eventually very much attached to me. She said often that I was the only sister who never gave her any trouble, or who had any idea of obedience. The fact was that I cared

very little about anything, and took things as they came. I was not interested in the little intrigues of the house, nor did I care whether we had white vestments or blue, or whether we fasted or feasted. Dr. Pusey came to hear confessions at stated times, but it was said that the rector of the parish (St. Mary Magdalene's), who was a very high churchman, was seriously offended, as he thought that Dr. Pusey ought to have allowed him that privilege. Looking back on it all now, it does seem marvellous that a man like Dr. Pusey should have acted as he did. There would have been some excuse if it had been a place where the sisters could not have had a confessor. Even on his own principles he was acting wrongly.

I remember one occasion when Miss Langston, the superioress, was absent, and Sister Jane had us in charge, I received a letter which needed, or which she thought needed, some advice. I do not remember now what the subject was, but I do well remember that she decided that the advice of the rector should be asked. We went to him together, but I do not recall any benefit from the interview. His manner was pompous and unpleasant, but Sister Jane had gained her point. She had always maintained that he was the person to whom we ought to go for spiritual advice, though she most sincerely liked and appreciated Dr. Pusey.

She was, however, very much blamed on Miss Langston's return; for Miss Langston always took the part of Dr. Pusey, whether from policy, or necessity, I could not tell. One thing was certain, she got very little personal comfort from his ministrations; for he never failed to inform her how much better the house would be governed if Miss Sellon was superior.

There is no doubt—and his best friends knew it and deplored it—that Dr. Pusey had an infatuation for Miss Sellon which was very little short of mania. The woman had laid her spell on him ; and, as far as I can learn, she held him in thrall to the bitter end. I know that poor Miss Langston's life was made a burden to her by Dr. Pusey's insistence on the necessity for handing over St. Saviour's to his favourite ; but I know that on this one point Miss Langston was well supported by the sisters, who, if they agreed in nothing else, agreed in demanding that they should be left as they were.

At that time I knew nothing of Miss Sellon, but later I knew that all which I heard was true. So much for Protestant imitations of Catholic practices. If we expostulated that the obedience which she demanded from us was not the obedience even of the Roman Church, we were told that we were ignorant, and we had no means of gaining information.

But day after day passed in a round of monotonous work and religious services. The books of devotion which we used were all "adapted" from the Church of Rome. We said vespers, and matins, and the "hours"—not as in the Roman service, for that would have shown us how Rome worshipped Mary and the saints, but in the revisions of Rome made by Dr. Pusey, or some one whom he could trust. We had much of this in manuscript, for the services according to Rome and Pusey were not then printed. I have said before that Rome is not all evil, that she still keeps some Christian truth. It is what she has added that contains the evil. She has "departed from the faith" by additions of her own invention. We were given much that was beautiful ; how could we know that in the

original it was marred and defaced by so much that was evil? The *Veni Sancti Spiritus* and the *Veni Creator*, used in English in the services of the Church of England, are taken from the Roman Catholic Prayer Books, and are of Roman Catholic origin. So are the collects, and many of the prayers of that Church.

But events were pending which we little anticipated, and which were to change all our plans. The Crimean War had desolated Europe, and we were destined to feel its effects even in our quiet retreat. It was just the opportunity which Miss Sellon had so long desired. Sister Jane and others told me that her great ambition was to be mistress of the establishment in Osnaburgh Street, and I could well believe it. In the first place, it was even then a noble institution; no money had been spared on it. Money, indeed, was the only thing which we did not want; it abounded. As I have said, there were so many who were ready to sacrifice their friends, and even their money, to the cause, that the difficulty was not to find money, but to find ways of using it. Miss Sellon felt she was relegated to an inferior position in Plymouth, and that London alone was worthy of her gifts and abilities. Dr. Pusey, in duty bound, agreed with her. But what could be done? We had possession in Osnaburgh Street, and there must have had some vested rights, or those who supported it were not in Miss Sellon's favour. The Crimean War settled the matter, and settled it promptly. It was decided by Dr. Pusey and those concerned that a detachment of sisters from the Anglican convents should offer their services to attend the wounded. Miss Sellon's diplomacy was worthy of a better cause. She saw a way to

dispossess Miss Langston with apparent friendliness, and to secure Osnaburgh Street. At one fell blow—rather, I should say, by one gracious act—she declared that Miss Langston, and Miss Langston alone, was fitted for the position of superior of the nurses, and, of course, added that she would make the personal sacrifice of adding the charge of her home to her other cares. All the sisters who were in good health were to join the Crimean party, and the delicate sisters were to remain. Miss Sellon came up to London to make arrangements, and, of course, could not be refused hospitality at St. Saviour's. Her triumph was complete. Poor Miss Langston confided to me with many tears what she knew would be the result ; but she was powerless. She could not refuse, nor did she wish to refuse, to join the nurses ; though she knew well—what proved to be the case—that Miss Sellon would appoint one of her own party superior, while giving Miss Langston the title nominally. Each one of our little band, who were really sincerely attached to each other and to the home, foresaw the result, but were powerless to avert it. Miss Sellon saw each sister, and caressed her and flattered her as she thought would best serve her own purpose. I was very much inclined to return home ; but my dislike to the world and to society had not changed, and it seemed to me to matter little where I went or what disposition was made of me. One thing we all found, and that was, that Miss Sellon was determined to separate us. She spared no pains to gain her end. Even in the Crimea she had so arranged matters that Sister Etheldreda, Sister Anne, and Miss Langston, known as Mother Emma, should not meet, or, if they did meet, that they should have no opportunity of

conversing together. Sister Jane, I think, went home. Her dread of Miss Sellon was too great to allow of her trusting herself to her; and I do not wonder. The sister who had charge of the orphans was sent to the Crimea, and one of Miss Sellon's followers was put in her place. For myself, though I remember every place where I was sent by Miss Sellon from time to time, I do not now remember where I was sent first; but I think it was to Plymouth.

One of Miss Sellon's objects was to make it appear as if her "Order" was very extensive in its operations; so she had houses in many places, to the infinite discomfort of the poor sisters, who were frequently left alone for weeks together in lonely places, and who were often called up in the middle of the night to go, for no reason whatsoever, from one place to another, to teach them obedience. The amount of folly which was dignified by this name was past belief, to all but those who had painful experience of it.

At Plymouth Miss Sellon had a home for boys, in which she took considerable pride. They were in charge of a very excellent sister, with whom I soon became great friends. We agreed in our love of our charges. This lady was quite an elderly person, and was indeed, as far as she could be, a mother to me. But Miss Sellon never allowed any one under her care to be happy long. No one was ever told her reason for any change, so it was natural that we should consider it proceeded in most cases from pure caprice. She was afraid, however, to make too many changes in the Boys' Home, as I believe she hoped to get Government recognition for it eventually. It was also the only establishment she had which could be called an institution. There was no work done in the

other places. How could there be, when there was very seldom more than one sister at a time in the house? This sister was supposed to occupy her time visiting the poor and saying her office (prayers prepared by Dr. Pusey from the Roman Catholic Prayer Book). There was one thing I could not bear at the Boys' Home, and that was the brutal punishments inflicted on them, as far as I could see, from mere caprice.

An old sailor was employed to teach them to "man the yards" on a fancy ship, and other such-like sailor crafts, and also to flog them whenever he was ordered to do so by the sister in charge. The sisters were expected to be present on these occasions; but as I positively refused, and always left the house when I knew the flogging was to be performed, I was not in much favour. However, Miss Sellon had her own reasons for passing by such actions on my part without notice. Like all bullies, she was a coward at heart, and could have been easily subdued if she had found any one who was capable of coping with her. In fact, she would not have been tolerated for a moment as superior but for her influence with Dr. Pusey. We all found that it was quite useless to complain to him of her in any way whatsoever; and I believe there are some still living who would bear me out in this statement. She made one strict rule for her own protection, which was never broken. No sister was allowed to go to confession unless she was in the house, and she always remained in the room next to the one which Dr. Pusey occupied when he heard the sisters' confessions. When he had heard one sister he always went into her room before he heard the confession of another sister; hence I think

we were not unreasonable in concluding that he told Miss Sellon—if not in words, at least by implication—what had passed. And this was religion! This was the substitute offered to us for the sweet and simple Gospel of Jesus Christ!

I had certainly become very weary of Miss Sellon's caprices long before the termination of the Crimean War restored me to Miss Langston's care. I felt, as well I might, that the whole proceeding was simply a religious farce, without one redeeming quality. I do not say that all sisterhoods, Protestant and Catholic, are equally discreditable, but the general principle is the same. How could it be otherwise when all are alike founded on the principle of obedience to man, and when man is fallible? Man or woman, and perhaps still more woman, dressed in a little brief authority, if that authority is not under and of Divine origination, is a sorry spectacle indeed. After some time I decided to write to Dr. Pusey, as I rarely ever saw him. We all felt that when we had given up the "world" we ought to have had all the spiritual advantages promised to us. Certainly we were very far from having even what we had before we left our homes. Miss Sellon never deviated from her rule that no one should see or write to Dr. Pusey unless she was in the house. Her movements were erratic to the last degree, and we never knew where she was. She never replied to a letter, so we soon gave up communicating with her. Her usual mode of sending any message was simply to telegraph to a sister to come to her, and she made a speciality of sending these messages at night. It was "disobedience," to be visited with the severest punishment, to delay a moment, so the sister went off promptly to wherever she was ordered.

In all probability she would find that "mother" had gone to some of her other houses in the interval, or perhaps was in another place when she had the message sent, and she had then to be followed without food or rest to her location. All this was done ostensibly to practise us in obedience, or to enhance the dignity of the "lady superior" who could thus command her subjects.

Then we could not but see that the poor were out of question altogether. We were supposed to do wonders in the way of visiting the destitute and relieving their wants, but this was far from being the case. While money was spent like water in unnecessary railway journeys and such-like matters, it was with the greatest difficulty we could get even a trifle to give to the poor. Imagine what the cost was to bring every sister, and others connected with the institution, even twice a year, to wherever Miss Sellon happened to be, so that they might go to confess to Dr. Pusey, or, as we often said, to her, through Dr. Pusey. Indeed, she had established a system of confession to herself of a most ingenious character. She made those sisters who were sufficiently advanced keep a book called "a little soul," or some such fantastic name, and in this they were required to write down their daily failings and thoughts. I never was sufficiently advanced, and I never had to keep "a little soul."

Then money was squandered recklessly in the ceaseless journeys which she required the sisters to make for no purpose whatever, unless it was, as they often said, to show her power. Sometimes she sent a great distance for them, only to hear when they arrived that they were not wanted, and they might

return to the place whence they came from. They were obliged to account strictly for every penny given to them for travelling expenses, and their comfort was never considered for a moment. On one occasion, immediately after a boy had been brutally flogged at Plymouth, the sister in charge was sent for, and I was to have been left alone with boys who had every reason to mutiny. I told sister Amelia, when she announced to me that she had been sent for by "mother," that mother or no mother I would not remain in the house if she left it. It is true the boys loved me, and would have done anything for me, but some of them were almost men; they had been exasperated to madness by the unjust punishment which had been inflicted on one of their number, and I knew not what the consequences might be. I pitied the poor sister who would be held accountable for my misdeeds; but what could I do? She knew that I was slow to act, but that if I said anything I meant it; so she pacified me by assuring me she would return next day, and that she would send one of the boys for the man who had charge of them for their exercises, and who would take them off my hands altogether till her return. I could not resist her tears and sweetness, so I remained. She was a very dear old lady, and shamefully treated by Miss Sellon, who had neither respect nor consideration for age or merit. She did not return, but another sister was sent in her place, and I was told to go to some place near Windsor, the name of which I have forgotten long since, where I should find my favourite Sister Amelia.

One of Miss Sellon's rules, which was strictly observed, was never to allow any communication

between the sisters. When you were removed from any place you never heard of it, or what was done there again. I believe there was so much discontent and complaint, that she found it necessary to adopt the plan of keeping the sisters as separate as possible ; and then she had the most absurd ideas of convent life. She imagined she was copying Rome closely when she was simply making herself ridiculous. If Ritualists and those who think they are imitating Rome only knew how Rome laughs at their pretensions, they would be not a little amazed.

I found my new location to be a very delightful little cottage, on a lonely common. Dear Sister Amelia tried to impress me with the great consideration which "mother" had shown me in placing me where I should have the benefit of such good air, and pleasant surroundings. But alas for the mutability of all mother's plans ! In a day or so a telegram arrived ordering Sister Amelia away. She would not tell me her destination, nor indeed did I care to know it ; but I did not admire being left absolutely alone in a strange place, where I did not know a soul, and where I do not think there was even a cottage in sight. The poor sister saw that I was very much disturbed ; but what could she do ? She dare not disobey the summons. I did not know what to do either. I was left without money, and I did not know any one to whom I could have applied to help me.

In the afternoon a gentleman rode up to the door with his two little boys—dear lads—on their ponies, and said he had heard that I had been left all alone. He begged me to go to his house, said I should have a room to myself and the attendance of a servant, and that no one should even speak to me.

I can never forget his kindness, but I refused with many thanks. I had made up my mind to leave as soon as I could get some money from my friends. I found afterwards that this gentleman bore no love to Miss Sellon, who had made disunion in his family. She had got his wife so infatuated with her that she spent half her time with her, to the utter neglect of her husband and children. This lady was very wealthy, and was not a person of much judgment. She was flattered by being made so much of by Miss Sellon, who at that time, at least, was thought a great deal of by persons who knew nothing of her real character.

Now that sisterhoods have become more common, the view which was taken of them when they were first commenced will not be easily understood. Miss Sellon's sisterhood flew into notoriety, if not into honour, by the exposures of a public trial, which was begun by a lady whose name I have forgotten. I remember that the judge in the case was Lord Campbell, and the case came to be known as "Lord Campbell's Miss-cellanacies." Dr. Pusey's unhappy infatuation for Miss Sellon, which I believe was regretted by his best friends, also gave her an unenviable notoriety; and later several books were written exposing her sisterhood. Certainly every one could not have been wrong in their denunciation of her system, nor do I believe that her work would have been carried on for any length of time but for Dr. Pusey's protection. Whatever she did was right in his eyes. He spent much of his time in the house with her, and always occupied the room next to hers. As no one was allowed to write to him except with her permission, and as she made the rule above stated as to

intercourse with him, even of a spiritual character, she could easily maintain her sway. The dream of his life was the restoration of sisterhoods in the Episcopal Church ; and he believed that she, and she only, understood how to govern such institutions. Her ambition to be a " Lady Abbess " was unbounded, and it was gratified through him.

There were thousands of earnest and honest men and women who shared in Dr. Pusey's hopes and aspirations. We are all too apt to undervalue the sincerity and to think lightly of the conscientious opinions of those who differ from us. But experience teaches, or should teach, us differently. We know that we are sincere in our own beliefs ; why should we doubt the sincerity of others ? And the more sincere those who differ from us are, the more hope we may have to convince them of error.

Amongst those who trusted poor Miss Sellon utterly was the clergyman of the church in Plymouth, where she had established this College for Sailor Boys. So truly in earnest were this gentleman and his wife, that they gave up their baby girl to Miss Sellon to train her for convent life. Who could doubt the sincerity of a loving father and mother who had made such a sacrifice ? Alas for their utter ignorance of the person to whom they had given their treasure ! I pitied the poor babe from my heart. It was treated shamefully ; and I believe some years later the parents found out their mistake, and reclaimed their child. But the poor little thing was for years at the mercy of a woman who knew no mercy, and at the caprice of one who never considered the feelings or the welfare of any one except herself. Of course the child was taken everywhere Miss Sellon went, but

often she did not even see her for days together. When she did see the child it was to scold and punish her for imaginary offences, all of which had to be written down by the sister appointed to take care of the helpless little one.

There was yet another of Miss Sellon's victims whom I pitied greatly. I think she was not disillusioned until she found that all her devotion to Miss Sellon failed to procure even the least return in her own dying hour. This was "Child Charlie." I should say, perhaps, that Miss Sellon, who had a happy knack of combining originality and absurdity, had her sisters divided into different grades. There was an eldress and a mother eldress, and then sisters, and next a class of, I suppose I must say, novices, who were called "Child" so-and-so, according to their name. Poor "Child Charlie," though she was a lady by birth and of large fortune, had the unenviable post of servant to Miss Sellon. She was at the mercy of her caprices, and had no rest day or night. Whatever had to be done, and there was always something going on, was done by the much-enduring "Child Charlie."

Miss Sellon never left her rooms except to travel or drive. All her meals were brought to her, and sumptuous meals they were. Her health was delicate, and she needed every luxury to prolong her valuable life. At least so Dr. Pusey said, whenever any remark was made on the great difference between her fare and that of the sisters'. "Child Charlie" eventually succumbed to the terrible hardships to which she was subjected. She was obliged to go to the trains in all weathers, and rarely had time to change her clothing after exposure to rain or snow. She was always

obliged to walk, as Miss Sellon did not believe in expending money unless it was for some caprice. In summer's heat and winter's snow "Charlie" worked out her doom. At last she became so ill that she was actually unable to stand. It might have been supposed that Miss Sellon would have shown her some little consideration ; but this was far from being the case. She was doomed to die a lonely and neglected death ; and I believe she realised the fatal mistake she had made in taking a human idol for worship and service which should have been given to Another.

But I have wandered far from Windsor, and my experience there.

The lady of whose husband I have spoken was one of Miss Sellon's outside favourites, who had also the honourable appellation of "Child." Hence she had a certain rank when she visited the sisterhood, which was very gratifying to her ; and I believe she was the only one honoured with the title of "Child" who did not live with the sisters. She supplied Miss Sellon liberally with money, and of course was treated very differently from the "children" who formed part of the household. She was, however, exercised in pleasant and easy obediences, such as surprise messages to come to Miss Sellon when Miss Sellon happened to be within a convenient distance ; and thus the little delusion was kept up of practising the "religious life." Her husband, I have no doubt, meant kindly towards me ; but I do him no injustice when I add that he knew very well Miss Sellon would have been very angry if I had gone to his house, and that he would not have grieved greatly to have been the cause of annoyance to her.

Sister Amelia returned in a few days. In the meantime I had written to my aunt's maid, and asked her to send me some money, which she did promptly. My dear old Grannie at this time had become quite blind from cataract. The doctors had given her every hope of a cure if she had submitted to an operation, but she said No; she did not care for earthly sights or sounds; she would wait until she should see the "King in His beauty." My darling, you have seen Him now for many a day, while your poor child has wandered through the weary wilds of earth.

Sister Amelia brought me the welcome news that Miss Langston had returned from the Crimea. She was in bad health, but she greatly longed to see me. I was not surprised to hear that her health had broken down. We were not allowed to see a newspaper all this time, or indeed at any time; but this is the rule in all conventual institutions. Ignorance is bliss for the superiors, who might find knowledge a difficult matter to deal with in their subjects. I had heard vague rumours about the termination of the war, and I had heard rumours also that our sisters were not as much appreciated as they expected. But had not the great deed been accomplished? and had not the "sisters of the Anglican branch of the Catholic Church" done service like the "real" Roman Catholic sister?

I had now been absent from home several years, and for many reasons I was unwilling to return. It may be said that my feelings were morbid; but I have told the truth about myself, as far as I know it, in this "Story of my Life." I could not bear to return again to Exeter. My heart-wound was still

very sore. I had no interest in life, and I had begun to love Miss Langston very dearly before we were separated; so it was not difficult for me to make up my mind to go to her. This time I found her in London, and in the neighbourhood of Spitalfields, if I remember rightly.

CHAPTER VI.

I "GO OVER TO ROME."

"Oh, it is a weary life,
Full of toils and dangers ;
Full of sorrows, full of strife,
We in it but strangers."

MONSELL.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."—HEB. iv. 9.

I FOUND Miss Langston as affectionate as ever, but sadly depressed. Miss Sellon had accomplished her object, and poor Miss Langston was not allowed to return to St. Saviour's, where she had so long laboured, and which, indeed, she had mainly established. It is remarkable, and, alas ! it is true, that cruelty—and I use the word in a general sense—is the characteristic of Romanism. The spirit of the Inquisition is the spirit of Rome. It is not the spirit of Christ. Rome has always wreaked her deadliest vengeance on those who once belonged to her pale after they have left her, when she could get them within her grasp. There is no stretching out of loving arms towards the returning prodigal. St. Thomas of Aquinas, who is the patron and model of the present Pope, teaches that an apostate may be forgiven once, but he must, all the same, be severely punished. But if he lapses the second time, he may be forgiven for the next world, but he can never be forgiven in this.

Death, in a more or less merciful form, is all that he can expect.

Miss Langston had done nothing to offend the autocrat of our destinies, but Miss Langston had to be shown that she had committed a crime of magnitude when she had refused to accept Miss Sellon's supremacy before she was actually compelled by circumstances to do so. Hence, and for other reasons, she was to be relegated to obscurity.

Miss Sellon was very well aware of my position, social and otherwise, and thought it expedient to temporise with me. But she was afraid to trust me with too much knowledge of her proceedings ; so I was safest also in obscurity, if only I could be kept there. Imagine, if you can, my amazement when I was informed by Miss Langston—who, poor soul ! tried to be loyal to Miss Sellon to a degree that was absolutely touching—that we were not to converse with each other. I was, in fact, to be held in solitary confinement. I had a fair-sized room, but it was the only room in the house which I was allowed to enter. My meals were brought to me by a servant, and any communications which I had to make to Miss Langston were to be in writing. I was to visit the sick according to order, and to study as I liked ; a few books being provided for me, and some of Miss Yonge's writings and others of that class.

I found that Miss Langston's charge was an extraordinary one. A girl of about fourteen or fifteen was in the house, half as lunatic and half as Magdalene. Her complete history I never learned, though if I had cared to speak to the servant I am sure I might have known it all. Miss Langston told me one day—for even she could not keep up the rule of complete

silence—that this girl was of a very high family ; that her mother had died and left her an orphan in India, where she had been ruined by servants. What became of the hapless girl I never heard, but Miss Langston was her slave day and night ; and such a charge was a refinement of cruelty to one of her high culture and sensitive nature.

I began to visit amongst the poor weavers ; but it was the old story. I could get nothing to bring them, and I did not believe in offering the gospel of talk to starving people. I could tell many a pitiful tale of my visits, but this is not the place to do so. One case alone I must put on record, as it was actually the means of my going over to Rome. I had to visit a poor woman who was dying. She was not in actual temporal want, but, poor soul ! she was in grievous spiritual want. I was told only to read prayers for her, and did what I was told ; but I dared to be affectionate to her, and I saw that it soothed her. Miss Langston told me one day that the clergyman of the parish, who was supposed to be “high,” and a follower of the Gospel according to Pusey, would go to administer the Sacrament to her, as it was found that she had never received it. At that time some respect was paid to the Rubric requiring more than the minister to be present on such occasions, and I was to assist. I brought a “fair linen cloth,” and such other matters as were then considered necessary. The poor woman was in a fearful state of nervousness, and the ceremony was not the slightest comfort to her.

The clergyman, whom I had not seen previously, stared at me more than he need have done. But any one belonging to Miss Sellon was then an object of morbid curiosity. I had not been allowed to speak

to him, as Miss Sellon did not permit any of her sisters to speak to any clergyman except Dr. Pusey. She lived in fear, as well she might, lest we might get any information that would withdraw us from that state in life which she considered good for us.

When the clergyman was about to give the wine to the poor woman, either through carelessness on his part or nervousness on hers, he spilled a quantity of it. After the ceremony he turned to me, and expressed a polite hope that the Communion cloth which I had brought was not seriously injured. I looked at him with indignation, but said never a word. Doubtless he either admired or was amused at my silence, but it arose from a very different cause to what he supposed. I had been thinking deeply in my solitude, and had come to the conclusion that Puseyism was a very miserable imitation at best, and that if all Doctor Pusey said was true about the necessity of a reform in the Church of England, that I had better try the Church which he wished us to take as our model, when, of course, revised by him.

On my return I handed the stained cloth to Miss Langston, and said it was my opinion that we were either believing too little or too much. If Rome was right, and this was the very blood of Christ, why should we remain in a Church which clearly did not believe this, or its ministers would be required to show more reverence to it? If this was but the symbol of His love, we were offering something very like Divine worship to it. I saw that Miss Langston agreed with me, but she dare not say so. I then made up my mind to try and see a priest when I next went out, and I succeeded. First, however, I

thought I would see this minister, and try to get some idea of what he believed.

It was not difficult for me to do this. I was sent out every day to visit some sick person, and could take my time unremarked, for many reasons. I knew the clergyman lived near one of my places of call, and I took the first opportunity of seeing him. My visit was productive of more amusement than good. In the first place, I saw that he was very much frightened. He was evidently a very timid man ; possibly because he had been, as I learned later, under the control of three wives. He said, in reply to my questions, that he did not like to interfere ; that I was under the control of Dr. Pusey, who appeared to me to have England, if not the world, for his diocese ; that there were many points on which he had not made up his own mind ; that he hoped I was not thinking of going over to Rome, as he was sure I should find eventually in my own Church all that I needed. I thought I did not want any longer to belong to a Church which needed so much adding to it, and when the adding was taken from a Church which we were told was not a safe guide for us, but was a safe guide for Dr. Pusey. Somehow, it seemed to me that things were, as they say in America, somewhat "mixed." I was about to take my leave, when he said, in somewhat hesitating accents, "My daughters saw you come in. They will be asking what you came for ; what can I tell them ?" I answered, somewhat indignantly, that he might tell them whatever he liked. As I was leaving his study, I saw a crowd of girls looking at me from the head of the stairs, and laughing in anything but a ladylike manner. I suppose the assembled ladies were the children of his three marriages, who, what-

ever else they may have disagreed in, were at least unanimous in their curiosity.

I now determined to try Rome. My first step was to call at a convent of men, or a monastery, which I also passed often in my walks. I rang the bell with no little trepidation ; it was my first interview with a priest. A lay brother opened the door, and asked, without waiting to be questioned, if I wanted to see any of the Fathers. I replied that I would like to speak to one of them, but that I wanted to keep the matter secret. He assured me there was no fear, showed me into a room which was divided off from the other rooms by a partition of muffed glass, and soon I saw a priest entering, whom I knew at first sight to be French. I spoke to him, however, in English, and found he understood it well enough for all practical purposes. I told him who I was. He at once proposed to take a cab and take me to Dr. Manning, but this I positively refused. I said I merely wanted information. He gave me a Catholic catechism, and answered any questions I asked him. But how did I know what to ask ? I knew nothing of Rome, but that I had heard it denounced again and again as a great evil by my own friends, without any solid explanation as to what the evil was ; and I had heard it spoken of by Dr. Pusey as the Church of which ours was a branch, and I had seen some expurgated books, which contained much that was very beautiful, which Rome used. I was simply and utterly ignorant, and I had no means of getting light. I had made great use of the "Imitation of Christ," and of the works of St. Francis of Sales, and came to the not unnatural conclusion that a Church which could produce men who wrote such works could not

be the very evil thing which I had heard it was in my early days. I did not know the vast literature of evil which Rome possesses, nor did I know that these writers were almost the only Christian writers of whom Rome can boast. I longed to be at rest, and, like many another weary soul, I wanted the rest here which can only be our portion hereafter.

I wrote to Dr. Pusey, and told him honestly my state of mind, and posted the letter myself, for I knew if I did not he would never receive it. He replied promptly. He lived in dread of any of his followers "going over to Rome," for he knew a few such perversions at that time would be a serious check to his schemes of reforming his own Church. Manning had gone already, and many others. He did not try to use any argument with me; he simply took the same line that Roman Catholic priests have taken since I left Rome. He assured me that if I left "the Church of my baptism" I should most assuredly be damned for ever.

I have so often been consigned to eternal damnation by those from whom I have presumed to differ, that I have begun to find it monotonous; but the reader may be assured that I was terrified then by Dr. Pusey's threats. Later I found that this was his usual resource, at least with women, and very often with men. What an idea of religion! Here was a man who practically agreed with no one but himself, and had set himself up to reform every one; who was certain that he held the judgments of God in his hand to deal them out as he pleased; and yet the dear Lord has said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved." These men say, "Believe in me, or in the Church in which I believe, and you shall be saved."

I heard also, later, that Dr. Pusey was in the habit of requiring his "penitents" to take a solemn oath that they would never become Catholics—an oath which was taken to be broken in many a case. I must admit that I was for a time deterred by Dr. Pusey's violence. I said to myself he must know best, but something seemed to urge me on ; and I thought as he differed so widely from most of the bishops of our own Church in his religious views, that he might not, after all, have all the infallibility which he so plainly claimed. Then I knew also that one by one the men whom he had taught me to revere were going over to Rome, and it was supposed then that he would follow himself sooner or later.

I wrote to a lady whom I had met, strange to say, at the house of my friend, whose death had left me so desolate, who I knew had joined the Church of Rome, and asked her to send me some Catholic book from which I could get an idea of what Rome taught, and also to send me an introduction to some priest in London. I need not say that she complied very promptly with my request. I do not now remember the name of the book which she sent, but I know it was in the style of Cardinal Gibbons' books, which are written to delude a confiding American public, and which give no idea of the real teachings of Rome, much less of her practices. The introduction was to a priest who has since become a Jesuit. He was from home when I called at Moorfields, where he was then stationed ; but I was received by another priest, and he, God knows whether wilfully or not, deceived me completely as to the teaching of Rome.

The point on which I asked information most earnestly was in regard to the devotion practised to the

Virgin Mary. He assured me again and again, and as I found out afterwards, falsely, that Rome did not worship Mary ; in fact, he expressed himself horrified at the very idea. Did he not know that it is written in the "Glories of Mary," over and over again, that Mary is the mediator to whom we must look if we desire to be certain of salvation ; that Christ is a harsh and cruel Judge, while she is the merciful advocate ; and that this book is authorised by infallible popes ? Hence no Catholic dare question its teaching, and, as a matter of fact, no Catholic wishes to question it. Did he not know of the Devotion of the Scapular, which makes a saviour of Mary in this world and the next—a devotion authorised by five or six "infallible" popes ?

But I was in ignorance of all these things. How could I believe or imagine that an English gentleman would deliberately deceive me ? The question of the Pope's infallibility was not then before the world. He talked to me long and earnestly about the "Church." How grand it was to belong to the Universal Church ! That it was impossible for a body of Christian men, when they came together and invoked the light of the Holy Ghost, to fall into error. And yet not long after this the same body of Christian men handed over this wonderful gift, which had been the boast of the Catholic Church for ages, to a man who can now proclaim whatever he pleases to be truth, independently of the long boasted Church. If the Church was infallible for nearly nineteen hundred years, why make the Pope infallible in the nineteenth century, and declare that he is infallible independently of the Church ? Rome might at least be consistent in her teaching. But the world is so careless, and so many ask, What

is truth? and never wait for a reply, that it is easy to impose on its credulity or its indifference.

The Church of which we used to hear so much in the early days of Ritualism has ceased to be, for all practical purposes. The Pope now takes alone the place which the Church held for ages, and yet there are millions of Catholics who know nothing of this. Born since the change, or having been too young to hear it discussed, they, if they think at all, suppose that the Church is still infallible, whereas it is dead as a teaching body ; and as it cannot teach any longer, there is no Church for us to hear.

But how could I see into the future, or know that the folly or vanity of Pius IX. would destroy the Church, of which he was supposed to be the guardian and protector?

Why should I have been asked, years after I had declared my belief in the Holy Catholic Church, to change that belief, and under pain of eternal damnation to believe in the Pope? There is little doubt that the next dogma of the Church will be belief in the temporal power of the Pope, and that he or his immediate successor will call on all nations to proclaim him temporal king of the world, even as he now claims to be spiritual king. Indeed, for all practical purposes, belief in the temporal power of the Pope is enforced on the Church, for severe penalties have been inflicted already on those Catholics who have dared to question it.

I do not know whether the priest who received me into the Church of Rome is still living or not ; he was afterwards made a bishop. I believe, and shall always believe, that there were clergymen of the ritualistic persuasion who entered the Church of Rome

who have deliberately shut their eyes to the crying evils of that Church. How otherwise could they have remained members of it? They *will* not see, because they do not wish to see. I have known instances of this. It is far easier to condone evils than to denounce them. The path of the reformer is not one of roses; and the world, even when it calls itself Christian, has very little sympathy with those who denounce evil.

One thing I know. When I joined the Church of Rome I had no idea of what Rome taught, or of what Rome was. I knew later, to my bitter cost, when the knowledge was useless. My dream was shattered, for dream it was. Would to God it had been true!

Father P—— arranged for me to remain with some French sisters while I was being received into the Roman Church. I was given a catechism, but I scarcely looked at it. I thought a catechism was only for children, and that it would be of little use to me. I have often wished since that I had studied that little book carefully; I might have obtained some information which would have saved me much future suffering. But everything was hurried. At this time Catholics were triumphant. They were sure that it was only a matter of time, and that a short time, before England would be “converted,” and every addition to their ranks was hailed with delight. Above all, the acute Cardinal Wiseman was anxious to secure converts from good families. It was said that England had been lost to Rome through her nobles, and now she would be restored through her nobles. He was also very anxious to secure conversions amongst those who were engaged in literary pursuits, or who had any reputation in the world of letters. Although I was

still young I had begun to write, and was looked on as one who might do much for the cause.

In one sense, the predictions which were made about me were true. I believe there are few who entered Rome at that time who did so much personally for the Church, yet to-day all the recompense I have is to be assured that I have lost my soul, and to be left to the doubtful charity of strangers for my daily bread. The fact, declared at the time by Roman Catholic authority, that I had saved hundreds from starvation is as nothing now. If the Inquisition had the power which it used to exercise, and which it may have again if Christian people are not warned in time, all that I have done would not procure for me even a mitigation of the death penalty, or the torture which would precede it.

And yet Rome claims to be a Christian Church !

CHAPTER VII.

A CATHOLIC SISTERHOOD.

“ Work for some good, be it ever so slowly ;
Labour ! all labour is noble and holy.”

FRANCES OSGOOD.

“ For every tree is known by his own fruit.”—LUKE vi. 44.

I WAS received into the Catholic Church in the month of July, and on a Sunday. I insisted that all should be done as quietly as possible. Only the French sisters were present with whom I was staying, and some of their pupils, whom they were anxious to impress. It will never be known in this world how many of the conversions to the Roman Church are due to appeals to the senses. Every sense is fascinated, and nothing is spared to make ceremonies attractive to poor human nature. I remember one very amusing incident connected with my visit to these sisters. The priest who received me into the Catholic Church was anxious to pay them some compliment in return for their kindness to me, though they were deeply indebted to him. He was the means of bringing them to England, and of establishing them in this country. Being himself a gentleman of independent property, he was able to do much as he pleased in many things. He decided to give them the material for a very rich white silk vestment, and asked me to go with him to a shop to choose it. I agreed to do so without a thought. I

was in far too apathetic a state of mind to object to anything. I do not now remember where we went, but I do remember the smile on the face of the shopman who attended us. He had not the slightest doubt that the rich and costly silk which was asked for was intended for a very different purpose. Father P—— did not notice what was passing till I contrived to call his attention to the evident mistake. He looked very much annoyed, and somewhat sharply told the man that he was a Catholic priest, and wanted the material for a vestment to be worn in his church.

My stay with these sisters was brief, so that I saw very little of their mode of life, and knew very little of what they really were. I supposed that they were happy, and did not trouble myself to investigate further. Dr. Pusey had so long impressed on us all that there was no life so happy as the life of a sister, that we had come to believe him ; and when we found that we, at least, were very miserable, we took it for granted that it was because we were not in the Roman Catholic Church, where we supposed that everything was perfection. Just as children notice things, and forget them at the time, only to remember them with an extraordinary and inexplicable clearness years after, so I noticed at the time, and remembered long years afterwards, little remarks which showed that all was not as harmonious as it appeared. So are the young deceived again and again in regard to convent life. Even those who might know better fancy, because they see a sister now and then who, as they term it, looks happy, that all are so. It is true that all sisters are not unhappy, but it is also sadly true that an appearance of happiness is often

far from being an evidence of its existence. For the young, the halo of romance which has drawn them into the convent may remain for a time, and the countenance gets a fixed look from the monotony of the life, which passes for the expression of a peace which does not exist. I have often looked at the faces of sisters whom I have met, and who were not known to me, and more miserable countenances I have never seen. But this is when the mask is let fall. I am thinking now of one sister in particular, whose name I do not know, and of whose history I know nothing, who I saw in the waiting-room of a railway station in New York. Such an expression of utter and hopeless wretchedness I have never seen in the course of a long life. I did so wish to have spoken to her ; but of what use ? Pride and fear will keep a sister from admitting her unhappiness to a stranger ; and the knowledge that there is so little done by Christian people for the comfort or protection of those who leave the Roman Catholic Church keeps hundreds silent.

Afterwards, when I came to have some personal experience of the deceptions of convent life, I remembered many a look and word that had passed between these French and Irish sisters, which meant a great deal more than appeared on the surface.

Of course there were Irish sisters there ; where are they not ? If Ireland did not provide sisters and priests for Rome, there would be a sad falling off. Hence every energy of Christian people should be used to convert Ireland. There is not a people on earth who would make such splendid Christians as the Irish nation, if once they accepted Christ ; and if Ireland were converted Rome would soon fall from

even her present position. I am anxious in the present work to give all the information I can on the subject of convent life, and surely I have had a special experience. It has so happened, from my peculiar position, that I have had opportunities of knowing the inside life of other convents than my own, and that I have been the confidante of many a tale of misery. As I have entered on this subject now I may as well continue it, and give some facts which have come under my observation which are not directly connected with the story of my own life.

For many years my correspondence was so large that I was obliged to employ several secretaries. Letters came to me from all parts of the world, asking for help, temporal and spiritual, and for advice. Soon after I went to the United States I received a letter from a priest of high position in Canada, who asked me, as a special favour, to help him to find a home for some sisters who were so cruelly treated by their superior that their lives were made a burden to them. He said : " You, who have ever been the refuge of the troubled and the consoler of the afflicted, will, I am sure, help these poor sisters. They are in a deplorable condition. A French superior has been placed over them, and it is not with whips but with scorpions she rules them." He then went on to mention some matters which might sound trivial to the ears of those who do not know of what trifles the comfort or unhappiness of convent life is made up. Amongst other things he said that she had made St. Patrick's Day a fast day, especially to annoy the Irish sisters. I had been subjected myself to such contemptible annoyances from the sisters

while in Kenmare, that I knew to what depths of degrading pettiness women will descend when they wish to play the tyrant or tormentor to a fellow-sister.

In this century a sister cannot be beaten, or starved ; for, as I have so often said, though the Inquisition still exists, and is in active work, it has not its old power to torture at present. But no one who has not been shut up as sisters are, from all outside help to bear trouble, can even imagine what cruel suffering can be inflicted day after day in little things.

One case of a Sister of Mercy, of which I had personal knowledge, is now before me. She was disliked by her superior and some of the sisters with whom her lot was cast ; as far as I could see, only because she was more refined and cultivated than they were. At last an offer was made to some of the sisters to go on the foreign mission. This poor sister gladly seized on what she hoped might prove some relief, and asked to be one of those who might be permitted to join the band. She got the permission with some difficulty, because those who had taken pleasure in giving her pain, with a refinement of cruelty of which only such natures would be capable, did all they could to prevent her from obtaining the boon which she had so much reason to desire. At last all was settled, and Sister P—— went to London, to join the party which was going to Australia. All was suddenly changed, from what cause I do not know, nor did she ; and she was ordered to return to her tormentors. I was myself an eye-witness of her patience and their cruelty to her. And from this state of things there was no relief and no release for her but death.

This may perhaps be the place to speak on the subject of convent inspection. I know there are many Protestants who think if convents were inspected that all these evils would be at once removed. I am sorry to say that this is far from being the case, for several reasons. The Roman Catholic religion is a religion of spiritual fear. The Church is kept together by fear. It would be almost impossible for a Protestant to understand the state of fear in which every Romanist exists. The love of God is rarely heard of as a motive in the Catholic Church. The torments of the damned, the pains of purgatory, are the great points dwelt on in sermons and in the Confessional. Selfish fear is at the bottom of all Catholic living and belief. Hence, no matter how unhappy a sister may be, or how badly she may be treated, she will still cling to her convent, because she says it is better to suffer here than hereafter. You must first convert her from Rome before you can get her to leave the cloister; and while she is in the cloister it will be very difficult to convert her to Christ. But there is a way in which convent inspection could be carried out which should be done, and which could not fail to be productive of great good. Every institution under the care of sisters should be inspected regularly and carefully. Why should sisters' schools, and orphanages, and asylums be exempt from inspection more than other institutions of a similar kind? To fail in this kind of inspection is to do a grievous injustice to those who are in charge of the sisters, no matter what their religion may be. If such a system of inspection were steadily carried out for a very few years, sisters who were unhappy or ill-treated would get confidence in those who came to inspect the insti-

tutions, and they would, sooner or later, ask their help in difficulties.

Every sister is supposed to have a resource within the Church, as by applying to the bishop she can have her case put before him. But this is the veriest farce, as I know too well. The bishop may, or he may not, interfere in her favour; or he may act as the Archbishop of Tuam did in my case—he may refuse to make any investigation. Even if the bishop himself is not the cause of the trouble, he is at best very rarely present in the convent, and he cannot possibly protect a sister from those who are with her every day and every hour, if they are determined to make her life miserable.

The fact is that the whole system is wrong, and, unless you do away with the system, you cannot do away with the evils which it engenders.

After I had been received into the Church I was confirmed by Cardinal Wiseman, at his special request. He saw me several times, and expressed a desire that I should join the Sisters of Mercy in London, but for several reasons I did not wish to do so. What my reasons were I do not remember now. He also asked me to occupy myself as much as possible with literary work, which I promised to do. I had previously been confirmed and baptised in the Episcopal Church. But though the Ritualists fondly imagine that they have “orders,” Rome says “No”; and while Rome accepts the orders of the Greek Church, and does not re-ordain a Greek priest, she positively refuses to accept the orders of the convert who goes over from the Episcopal Church, no matter by whom he may have been ordained. I was very anxious to enter a convent at once, but my confessor positively forbade it, so I

had no resource but to remain in the world. I went back for a short time to Exeter, but, as might be expected, found very little comfort with my relatives. I had wrong ideas of Rome, and so had they ; so that neither of us did the other any good.

Some little things happened while I was there which might have opened my eyes if I had been better informed as to what Rome was, and less trustful. In the first place, I can never forget the effect which hearing the Litany of "the blessed Virgin" had on me. To say I was shocked is to say but little. I had been assured, so very strongly, that the Church of Rome did not worship, or pay any honour like worship, to the Virgin Mary, that I could hardly believe my senses when I heard her invoked as the "Queen of Heaven," the "Queen of all Saints," above all when I heard her called the "Refuge of Sinners," a title which surely belongs only to Him who died for sinners. It must be remembered that at this time I had never even heard of the scapular, or other devotions by which Rome puts Mary truly in the place of Christ. When I expressed my feelings about this Litany, and this method of addressing Mary, I was told by the priest it was not in the least necessary for me to say those prayers, but he added, "In time you will be like the rest of us, and do as we do." Now this was a cruel deceit. I did not know then, nor did I know for long after, that all this devotion to Mary was authorised by infallible Popes. Hence every Catholic is obliged to believe it, or to believe that the Pope has authorised what is wrong. For the time being I was silenced, if I was not satisfied.

The next shock was of a different, though not less painful, nature. Mrs. Galton, the wife of the rector of

St. Sidwell's, had joined the Catholic Church, much to the distress of her husband. But what she did was the necessary outcome of what he had taught her. She was consistent, and he was not. Mrs. Galton had a French and Roman Catholic governess for her children, and I was somewhat astonished at the remarks which she made about the priest, a Jesuit Father. She distinctly said that he was too familiar in his manner to her, and a good deal more, which I cannot record here. I was astonished that a Catholic, and above all a French Catholic, should speak so of a priest, whether he was or was not guilty. But I had yet to learn how French Catholics look on their priests, with the exception of a few devotees. The governess was sent back to France, and so, whether she was right or wrong, the matter was quickly ended.

The same priest rather astonished me one day by telling me that there was a member of his congregation to whom he was anxious to introduce me. She was married to a gentleman who was a convert to the Catholic Church, but certainly was not much credit to his religion. He belonged to one of the first families in England. The priest told me coolly that he did not treat his wife very well, and that he thought I might be a comfort to her, and she was anxious to know me. Of this man I will merely say that he eventually eloped with a young unmarried lady, but in the meantime he wore the scapular, and when he wanted to have it mended he would not take it off even for a moment. If he had not faith enough in God to believe that He would reward good and punish evil, he at least had faith in the Church. The Church teaches that any one who wears the scapular will be saved ; and in the books of instruction on this subject

innumerable instances are given in which men who lived infamous lives got the priest at the last moment, and so saved their souls, because they wore this bit of blessed cloth. I had not seen this scapular book then, nor did I see it for some time after. I thought, naturally, that the man was simply a fool. I did not know then, as I do now, that he was in reality showing his faith in the Church.

I was still very anxious to enter a convent, and I determined to do so as soon as I could find an opportunity, whether my confessor liked it or not. I could at least but try if I had a vocation. I had heard wonders of a convent in Staffordshire, founded by a Mother Margaret and Bishop Ullathorne, and I was told that it would be very easy to obtain admission there. Mother Margaret was indeed a very different person from Miss Sellon, and real convent life was something very different from the imitation. Still I found many things which to me seemed very inconsistent. The sisters were nearly all ladies of refinement and education, and *noblesse oblige* is as true in the convent as in the world, perhaps even more so. I found none of the petty quarrels which had disgraced Miss Sellon's institutions, and which disgraced Kenmare and Newry; but I found that there was an absence of truthfulness which I believe is essentially Roman Catholic, and universal in the Roman Catholic Church. There was a great talk of work, and yet comparatively little was done. Then people "in the world" were led to suppose that the sisters were leading very austere lives when they most certainly were not. For example, it was supposed that the sisters fasted very strictly and abstained from meat three days in the week. Now as a fact they really only abstained

on the days of abstinence commanded by the Church, except during Lent and Advent ; for on the other days when they did not eat meat they had instead the very strongest meat soup which could be made, and at all times the food was of the very best, and most abundant. I did not remain long in this convent, and went from there to Ireland. After a short stay in Dublin with some relatives, I was introduced by a friend to a Jesuit Father, an Englishman, who had come there attracted by the so-called university, though it had been forsaken in disgust by Cardinal Newman.

From this priest I heard of the Convent of Poor Clares, in Newry, and by his advice I entered that convent. As so much of the history of my convent life is connected with that institution, I will go into further details, hoping that the subject will be of interest to the general public, quite apart from any personal connection of my own with it. There is in the minds of most persons a fascination for anything which is mysterious, and this fascination may be a source of great good or great evil. It is too often a source of great evil. Human nature is complex, and marvellously fashioned. Superstition is the degenerate sister of faith, and all that is strange, and, above all, that is mysterious, in life has a natural attraction for us, because it touches that which is of the deepest interest to us. We all crave to know something of the unknown, and this desire, if it leads us to God, is Divine. But there is a forbidden knowledge which is not of faith, and, not being of faith, is of the evil one. To crave for this knowledge is not of God.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood : I am not for a moment deprecating curiosity about convent life ; far from it. If such curiosity is rightly directed it

will bear a blessed fruit ; but I merely indicate the sources from which all curiosity about that which is mysterious may spring. I have had a very large experience of human nature, and of feeling in regard to the peculiar conditions of which I write, and I desire to put facts before the public, and to say nothing but what can be proved. Hence I claim for my narrative the great advantage of truth. But feelings are in some sort facts, and we should never forget this. All acts begin in the mind, which, through feeling, gives the first impetus to action. Hence the great necessity of regulating feeling—a necessity which has not had the consideration which it deserves. Feeling is the motive power which directs the action ; hence if feeling is ill-regulated or ill-informed, the action will be injurious or evil.

I have made these remarks because I have found that there are some—perhaps I might say many—people who have a morbid curiosity about convent life. Hence, if they are simply told the truth about it, they are disappointed, because they expected some mysterious or tragical history. And yet there is mystery and tragedy enough in the most uneventful life of a sister, if only it was read aright. If people are looking for evils which do not exist at present,—and I use the word at present advisedly,—they will be disappointed ; and in the reaction from the disappointment they will become indifferent to the grave evils which do exist. This is not the part of wisdom ; I know, to my cost, that it is the way of the multitude. It seems so much more heroic to save life than to use those means which will prevent the loss of life. And yet he who saves another from cruel pain is surely as heroic as he who rushes to the rescue at

the last moment, after the sufferer has endured unheard-of torments. I advise a policy of prevention ; and if you prevent evil you must know fully the danger and the cause of the danger.

We need not go beyond the accounts of Roman Catholic historians themselves. We need never open a Protestant book on the subject of convent life to know all the evils of the system. The trouble is that people are so much more easily aroused by one fact before their eyes, than by a thousand facts recorded by others. But this is not the part of wisdom. The misfortune is that we are all so much more ready to act on the spur of the moment than to act on cool reflection. And yet the acts of cool reflection are so much more far-reaching, and so much more blessed. It is always so much easier to talk about Christ than to live a Christian life. It is always so much easier to give our experience in meeting than to practise virtue, which is not always pleasant.

I want you to know convent life as it is at present, and to know the terrible dangers to which it leads in the immediate future. You can gain this information best by a statement of facts about convent life, even if they are not of the sensational kind, which might prove more attractive for the moment. I speak to the wise, not to the unthinking multitude, and I beg of them to hear and to weigh what I have to say.

Perhaps few have entered convent life with a higher idea of what it was supposed to be than I did. So far, I had not been seriously disillusioned. I saw that Miss Sellon's parody of convent life was the growth of ignorance, and the result of selfishness. My experience of Mother Margaret's sisterhood was not all evil. I had read the lives of some of the sisters

who had been canonised by the Romish Church, and I saw that they had experienced very different treatment from their companions in religion, and from the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church, than I had supposed would have been possible. Rome, who boasts of her love of her cloistered orders, has written her own condemnation in the lives of those who have carried out her teaching, and who have, without exception, suffered the cruellest persecution from the Church, which has afterwards canonised them. The great evil in the only Catholic convent of which, up to this time, I had any personal experience was the want of truthfulness; and, in saying this, I do not charge any individual with untruthfulness. It was the system which was at fault. But surely this was a serious blot in a system which was founded on the supposition of being the source and cause of the very highest Christian perfection. Mother Margaret, being a sensible woman, and the real superioress of a real convent, did not put on any of the airs (there is no other word for it) which distinguished those who knew well that their position was doubtful, and who had no authority but their own to uphold them. It would have been impossible for any one under her charge to interfere with the sisters in their communication with their confessors.

Yet here I got the first and almost the only personal glimpse of the evils of the confessional. It was breathed, if I may say so, in the air that a convert priest—and they are always more Roman than Rome—was asking questions in the confessional which were utterly unnecessary, and which were a disgrace to humanity. I was once asked such questions, but the first time was the last. Men of this class generally

know the kind of women they have to deal with. There are weak women as well as vile men ; there are women who will submit to any outrage of this sort sooner than utter a word of complaint. There are women who will even complain weakly, but who will never make the slightest effort to remedy the evil. They may be as pure as the heavens above them, but, all the same, their weakness is the cause of the perpetuation of evil, and may be the cause of evil in others. Besides, who dare complain of a confessor ? He has, so Rome teaches, Divine right on his side ; and if you complain you are the party to blame.

I found in this convent, as I have found in every convent more or less, a trust in penance, which is so contrary to trust in Christ.

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

This is the Christian creed. Here I found that a bloody discipline was the trust, and that it was supposed the more you did to make suffering for yourself, the higher place you would have in that heaven which Christ has offered us without money and without price. I used to hear within those walls resounding blows, such as I never heard elsewhere, self-inflicted, night after night, and this in a Christian land, and in an English convent. But these sisters are Sisters of Penance, and in some respects they are true to their vocation.

“Nothing in my hand I bring”

Nothing, nothing ; for is not Christ our all ? Having Him, what need we more ?

And yet, and yet—oh the pity of it !—there are Christian men and women to-day who are supporting by their wealth, by their influence—yes, even by their

silent acquiescence in evil—those institutions where the dripping blood from the quivering flesh of the human victim is offered to God, if not as a substitute for the blood of Jesus, yet at least as a necessary addition to it.

I suppose that my Irish birth and connection had given me some love for that unhappy country, though I have always considered myself an English woman; as I was educated and brought up in England from my childhood. It is at least the land of my affection, in more senses than one. But I pitied the unhappy condition of Ireland; and as devotion to the service of the poor was far more in my mind as a motive to embrace the life of a sister than any hope of personal spiritual gain, I naturally turned to a convent in Ireland as a possible solution of many difficulties. For a time I thought myself happy in my choice, until I knew more. Would to God that my experience of convent life might be the means of saving others from troubles like mine! Would to God that it might be the means of opening the eyes of those who seem so determined to keep them closed! And if these things can be done, where as yet there is an open Bible, what will not be done when Rome has the power to rule England, as she is ruling Mexico, and as she has ruled Italy?

By the advice of Father A—— I went from Dublin to Newry, to see the superioress and the sisters. I need not say that all was *couleur de rose* for my visit. I was caressed, I was flattered, I was assured that soon all my troubles would end. Alas! it was the beginning of the end of a life of the sorest trial.

I may say that I was looked on as a prize. I was still young; I was very highly educated, and an

accomplished musician—a very important matter in a convent, where music is so much used to attract. I had a fair private fortune; I was my own mistress, and could act as I pleased; so there would be none of the difficulties which even Catholic parents sometimes put in the way of their children when they desire to enter a convent. I was attractive in manner and appearance.

The convent in Newry was at that time in a state of depression from several causes. I was of course kept in ignorance of all this. Let not any young and ardent soul suppose when she has been received with effusion in the convent parlour, or permitted further to enter into the more sacred precincts, when it is supposed that she has made up her mind to “enter,” that she knows anything of the real state of the convent. She is in as black ignorance as the most utter stranger. Do not let any one suppose when she has passed her novitiate, and begs with so many entreaties to receive the black veil, and make her final vows, that she knows what convent life really is. She may know a little more than when she first entered, but that little is scarcely worth knowing.

I know what utter ridicule will be made of this assertion by Catholics, but it is true, and I hope to prove that it is true. Furthermore, I know that there are many Catholic parents who would never allow their children to enter convents if they knew what I know of convent life, and how far it is from the sublime ideal which they have formed. I make this digression here because the rest of this book will speak for itself, and prove the truth of what I here advance. And if there is all this misery and evil in convents to-day, what will there be in the future,

when Rome has absolute power, and when public opinion will be altogether silenced, as it is even now, to a great extent, in America? Then the evils of immorality, which Rome herself dare not deny in the past, will be revived, and the convent will become a house of open evil. Surely if Roman Catholics knew what has been the end of all conventual institutions as soon as the light of Gospel truth is withdrawn, they even would hesitate to support them. Surely if Protestants! who, because there is no evil of this kind in existence to-day, believe fondly that it never will exist, knew that the germs of this evil necessarily exist in all such institutions, they would be more earnest in protecting at least their native land from such horrors.

My decision was quickly made. I promised to return in a few days and enter on the life of a sister, in the Convent of Poor Clares, Newry, County Down.

CHAPTER VIII.

MY NOVITIATE AND PROFESSION IN NEWRY CONVENT, AND SUBSEQUENT REMOVAL TO KENMARE.

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

TOPLADY.

“Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”—ROM. v. 9.

THE Poor Clares are one of the oldest Orders in the Roman Catholic Church. Both for my own justification, and for the cause of truth, it is necessary that I should say here a few words as to this Order, and its position in Ireland. St. Clare lived in the twelfth century, and was a disciple of the well-known St. Francis of Assisi. She is said to have been of noble family, and perhaps there is not a saint in all the Roman calendar who has had such a halo of romance woven round her ; but romance is very apt to vanish in the light of modern discoveries of fact. At this time, however, I confidently believed in all the romance. In fact, it was too attractive not to be accepted without the traditional grain of salt ; and I admit that I am grieved even now to throw even a fleck of doubt on what appears so beautiful. The monks who wrote her history were, I fear, as much given to fiction as Miss Braddon or Mrs. Wood or any modern novelist, only they called their fiction fact, and

obtained the seal of an infallible Church to prove its veracity. No doubt such a person existed, and probably her family were noble, according to the ideas of the times. They were, we may suppose, upper-class bandits ; for this is pretty much what all mediæval barons were, *pace* historical romancers. She is said to have been beautiful, but all ladies were then beautiful ; and she is said to have had a passionate devotion to St. Francis, which I can well believe ; for of all saintly characters he seems to have been the most attractive, because he was the most Christ-like. He denounced Rome as far as he dare in his day ; and probably, if he had lived in this nineteenth century, he would have been an evangelist and a Gospel preacher. What the condition of the Catholic Church was in his time we have ample evidence, on his own authority. He had a vision, which is recorded with great unction by his monkish biographers, who did not see even dimly the significance of what they related. He saw the Church (Roman Catholic) falling into ruin, and he himself as the restorer of what was so decayed. Strange and mysterious providence ! The fault he had with the Church was the old story, old even in the twelfth century—pride, love of money, priestly arrogance. He went to the Pope with his complaints, as many a one has done before and since. At first he was scouted ; but at last, by dint of dogged perseverance, he obtained a hearing. He was authorised by the Pope to establish a new Order, which was to reform the world and the Church. But the Church would not be reformed, and the world could not be reformed. Even in his lifetime he saw the failure of his hopes. Poverty, he said, was his lady and mistress ; but, except his early disciples, he found few to

love poverty, so as to be willing to follow, even in the cloister, his idea of poverty. There is a shrine in my heart, dedicated to the memory of St. Francis of Assisi, which will never be vacant, because I love him for his love of my Lord. But vain were all his efforts and all his hopes. His sanctuary is deserted to-day, not because it has been desecrated by Protestants, but because Catholics have risen in revolt against his followers, who have neither obeyed his precepts nor those of his Master.

If one may believe the old chronicles, St. Clare was a very wonderful woman, and accomplished impossibilities. It is said that she ran away from home—which is quite probable; for we read later that her father had rough-and-ready methods of dealing with his daughters—that St. Francis put her into a convent, with some other nobly born ladies, where she lived and died in the odour of sanctity. I do not doubt that she lived and died a holy life, according to her lights; but I have had ocular demonstration that at least some of the marvels recorded of her were simply pious fictions.

It is said that she repelled the Saracens, though what brought them to the Umbrian valleys in the twelfth century no one knows. However, let that pass. Her convent, it is said, was attacked, and, notwithstanding its amazing fortifications, was about to be destroyed, when she arose from her sick bed, took the Sacrament from the tabernacle where it was reposing, and went on the ramparts, when in one moment the Saracens fled. Of course, this is given as the great miracle of her life. Thousands of Catholics purchase pictures year after year in which this marvel is represented. For myself, I never doubted it until

I went to Assisi, full of faith, to find that such a miracle could not have taken place. The convent which was then occupied by St. Clare is still there. It is on the slope of a very steep and very beautiful hill. It is so small that it would fit into an ordinary house easily, and it is asserted there most positively that it is in its original state. There is every reason to believe that this is true. It looks ancient, and it looks complete in itself. Two or three men could easily have captured it if they had been so minded, and there are no ramparts or towers on which St. Clare could have stood to perform the miracle. Indeed, the rooms are so small that they would scarcely give sleeping room for two persons in each, even if lying on the floor on straw.

The natives, having no reason to keep up a farce long since exploded, if indeed they ever heard of it, point with pride to the smallness of the ruined cloister or convent, to show how poorly St. Clare was lodged. So much for Roman legends. I do not doubt, I admit, that they are very beautiful. I regret that they are so seldom true.

Of course we were told all this, and, as I say, we believed it. What a power there is in ignorance! It is no wonder Rome clamours so loudly to be allowed to maintain it.

The large convent in the town, if it may be so called, of Assisi, which is still occupied by two or three sisters, and which was built long after this miracle is said to have taken place, must not be confounded with the original convent, where the marvellous defeat of the Saracens is said to have occurred.

The original rule of St. Clare, as given to her by St. Francis, appears very strict; but if compared with

the customs of the day, much of its alleged austerities will be seen to have been only the ordinary mode of life at that time. The sisters were enclosed very strictly ; but in that age all women were more or less confined to their homes ; and if these homes were lordly castles, they were seldom allowed to leave them, and were obliged to live a comparatively solitary life. However, the point to which I wish to call attention in this matter is simply this. The Poor Clares in France and Belgium, and other continental towns, and in, I believe, one convent in England, observe what is called the original rule of St. Clare ; that is to say, they do not eat meat, and they do not lie in bed, they keep a perpetual silence, and never allow any one to enter their enclosure. Now in Ireland all this was changed some years since. The religious Orders which keep these very strict rules are few in number, and have few inmates, for obvious reasons. At the beginning of the present century the then Bishop of Dublin re-established the Poor Clares in Ireland ; but before doing so he obtained permission from the then Pope to change their rule completely—in fact, they are only Poor Clares in name. They do not even say what is called the Divine Office, nor do they keep any fasts, except those of the Church, and they have only what is called an episcopal enclosure.

They are, in fact, Sisters of Mercy for all practical purposes, except that they do not go out to visit the sick or poor. Later I will show how I was bitterly reproached and shamefully abused by an English, or rather Scotch, priest for not doing what by my rule I was forbidden to do. This was my reward for trying to save the poor Irish in 1879 from famine. I simply

lived according to the rules made by the Pope for the Order to which I belonged, and he accused me in public and private of being a bad religious, because I did not do what I was not able to do if I wished to obey my ecclesiastical superiors. His conduct is a matter of little moment, except for the important moral which it points. It shows that a great deal of the enthusiasm which is expressed by the Catholic Church about sisters is simply put on for a purpose. I know many cases in convent life besides my own which would prove this.

I found Mrs. O'Hagan was the superioress of the convent in Newry. Her brother, later Lord O'Hagan, was at that time a rising lawyer, and a man evidently bound to make his mark. I did not know—how could I?—that Mrs. O'Hagan had been but just elected to be superior, and that, not to put "too fine a point upon it," she was hated by the older sisters, though certainly I think without cause. But it matters little in convent feuds—and they are the usual order of things—whether a superior or a sister is hated justly or unjustly. All seemed so smooth and calm; all looked so like peace and harmony. How could I tell that some of the sisters never spoke to each other, except in the parlour, where appearances are always kept up, and that one of the lay sisters fled to America, to escape shameful treatment, where she is at present? I learned this not from Protestants, but from Catholics. She was a sister for whom I had a great regard. If I had known it a little sooner I would have seen her before I left the United States. But I have reason to believe that she is well, and kindly treated by her friends. When I heard of her case—and there are hundreds similar—I did so long to have had a home to which

I could have asked her to come ; but Rome is too strong, and Protestants are too indifferent, to allow of any such institution in the United States.

In Newry Convent, as in most other convents, there are a class of sisters who are called lay sisters. It is a farce on the real *raison d'être* of convent life ; but Rome sanctions it : and who shall blame ? The idea of convent life is that all should be equal before God. It is, in fact, a sort of religious communism ; and Rome of late years, when she has found that liberalism helps her cause, has boasted of this. She boasts for the benefit of the ignorant. The lay sister is as veritable a slave as ever has been. It is the grand idea of convent life that all are equally the spouses of Christ, that all taking the vow of poverty are to be treated alike—*pas si bête*. The lay sister, who is sometimes the superior in education, and often the superior in virtue, of the choir sister, must be her humble servant. She must bow down before every sister, and always take the lowest place. She has no voice whatever in the affairs of the community, and, as a rule, knows absolutely nothing of what is going on. She is treated like the proverbial poor relation ; yet she is, according to the theory of the Church, as much the spouse of Christ as the sister to whom she humbly bows down.

So much for the consistency of Rome. I met a young lady in the United States who had been a boarder in a convent of the Sacred Heart, where the lay sisters are kept in special subjugation. This young lady, a Catholic, was sent home by the sisters eventually because she was too independent ; and when I heard her account of some of her convent adventures I was not surprised. She told me that after her

entrance she was informed that whenever she met a sister she should stand aside, and allow her to pass, making at the same time a deep reverence. Though she did not see the importance of this arrangement, she expressed her willingness to comply with it, but asked why this homage should be paid to any individual. She was informed that the respect was paid to the guardian angel of the sister, and found herself obliged to be content with this information.

Going upstairs just after she met a lay sister, and immediately put the lesson which she had just received in practice. A choir sister, or a "Madam," as the superior sisters of this Order are called, scolded her loudly for this.

"Why," she asked, "I have just been told by Madam — to do this."

"Oh," replied the other "Madam," "that is all right; but you are not to make any reverence to the lay sisters. They are to stand aside for you."

She replied, "Why, Madam —, have they no guardian angels?"

I found three lay sisters in Newry Convent—Sister Martha, Sister Mary, and Sister Veronica. The two former were just of the ordinary class of poor Irish women. Sister Veronica was a very different person. She had been well educated, was very attractive in manner and appearance, and I believe, as far as birth went, she was the superior of many of the sisters. But she was made to suffer for it. Even I could see very soon that she was not a favourite, and yet she had too much self-respect to quarrel with any one, or to fail in her duty. Some years after, while I was in Kenmare, I heard a rumour that she had committed the unpardonable sin of having left the convent. I

must confess, though it was very far from my intention then to do anything of the kind, that I was neither surprised nor scandalised. The only pity was that she had not left when she was younger and better able to face the world. Later, as I have said, I heard from a lady, who was, and still is, a Romanist, that she had been treated so cruelly she could bear it no longer. The two old lay sisters (Martha and Mary) had died, and all the work was put on poor Veronica's shoulders. When she began to fail from age and over-work nothing would be done for her help or comfort, and sisters who were well able to do the work dragged her out of bed, and flung her downstairs to teach her not to be "lazy." All this I heard, as I have said, not from Protestants, but from Romanists.

On occasion, however, the lay sisters can assert themselves. In some convents they get into a majority, because they are so much needed to do the work, when there are many boarders, that the choir sisters take a number of poor girls to make them lay sisters, and these girls never think of the future. The one ambition of the Irish woman is to be the mother of a priest, or to be the "spouse of Christ." The exalted idea which they have of this privilege leads them to make any sacrifice to obtain it. Only those who, like myself, have had experience of vocations, could have any idea of all that is done to give a priest an education, or to give a girl an outfit for the convent, and perhaps a small dowry. God help the poor Irish, for they are plundered day after day in the name of God! While they are not allowed to pay their honest debts, in the shape of rent, they are compelled to pay extortionate fees to obtain religious

privileges, and they submit because the Church tells them that by so doing they will save their souls, and gain a higher place in heaven.

Though the lay sister is supposed to need no dowry when she enters a convent, because she is to give the labour of her whole life as a servant to the nuns, she is nevertheless taxed in one way or another. She is obliged to provide an outfit—that is, she has to bring new clothing to the convent, which would last her for years if she were allowed to wear it. But she is not allowed to wear it. The good clothing is taken from her, on one excuse or another, and if she complains she is told that she has no vocation. Often her parents try to provide her with a small or even a large sum of money, so that she may, as they say, “hold up her head with the rest.” But this is of no use to her, either for honour or comfort, and she does not dare to say a word.

I entered Newry Convent in the month of July 1859, just one year after I had been received into the Roman Catholic Church.

I had scarcely joined the sisters when they began to speak of giving me the habit. In all religious communities there is a short time—in some more, in some less—during which the lady who desires to become a nun wears a plain black dress, and is with the sisters only part of her time. No one who did not know convent life as I know it, could believe what skill is used to prevent those who have entered a convent from knowing what goes on in it. It is supposed, and Protestants especially are constantly assured, that the time of the novitiate is arranged so that the sister may know just what convent life is before she takes her vows. It is a simple fact that

this time, during which we were supposed to be gaining information, was a time in which we were kept in the most complete ignorance of what we ought to have known. Certainly we were allowed to come to the choir, and say prayers, and hear mass with the rest ; but as for what actually went on in the convent we were kept in the most complete ignorance.

There is in every convent what is called a "chapter" of faults every week, or fortnight. At this "chapter" the sisters accuse themselves in turn of whatever faults they have committed against the rules. Now attendance at these "chapters" was anything but edifying. If a sister quarrelled with another sister she was obliged to accuse herself of it before all the rest, whether they had or had not been witnesses to it. We should soon have known that quarrelling was frequent if we had been allowed to attend these "chapters," and might have been disillusioned in more ways than one. Even when we had received the "white veil," and were supposed to have become part of the community, we were never allowed to know what went on at these meetings ; for we had first to accuse ourselves of any faults, and then to leave the room, while those who were professed, or even novices older than we were in "religion," told their tale of wrongdoing.

No pains were spared to keep anything from newcomers which might disedify them. Furthermore, we were never allowed to be present at the recreation of the professed sisters, lest we might witness their unseemly quarrels. On feast days we were indeed allowed to be in the same room, but we were carefully guarded from conversation with them by our mother of novices, one of whose duties it was to see that

nothing came to our sometimes sharp ears that we ought not to hear. So much for the constant boast that sisters have plenty of time to make up their minds whether they are fit for the life or not. But with all the precaution we got glimpses now and then which were not reassuring. However, if it was known that we had observed anything, we were at once told that it was quite exceptional, and that we might live for years in the convent and never see the like again!

Nor were we ever allowed to know anything about the domestic affairs, nor of course to know anything of the financial state of the house. When I think now of the ignorance in which we were kept of everything which we ought to have been told, and how we took it all as a matter of course, I wonder at our simplicity. But, after all, for those who had been born and educated Catholics it was different. They were so impressed from childhood with such an idea of the sanctity of the sister's life, and with such profound reverence for the character of a sister, that they would never have suspected that anything could be wilfully concealed, or that there could be anything to conceal.

I was very unwilling to receive the habit so soon, for I knew that it would bind me to the convent, and I had some misapprehensions, but Mrs. O'Hagan over-persuaded me. I did not know until after I had taken the white veil that she was in desperate financial straits, and was looking to my funds to help her. The ambitions, jealousies, and heart-burnings of convent life should be known to be understood.

Mrs. O'Hagan, as I have said, was comparatively

young. She had been mistress of novices for several years, and the mistress of novices generally obtains the affections and interests of those who have been placed under her. Mrs. O'Hagan was an attractive person, and warm-hearted when it suited her to be so. She was naturally gifted, which made up for her want of education, but she knew absolutely nothing of the world. She had been put into the convent while almost a child, and there was no one there capable of educating her or of enlarging her mind. She was full of ambition, and wanted to show some grand results for her time of office. The Sisters of Mercy had been introduced into Newry just before I went there, to the great indignation of the Poor Clares, who thought they had a monopoly of the charities of the town, and great was the heart-burning in consequence.

The rivalry between religious orders which was rife in the Middle Ages is a matter of history, if people would read history ; but rivalries have not ceased. At the present day every convent is jealous of every other. It is human nature, and human nature is as strong, and for some reasons stronger, in the cloister than elsewhere. The sisters, who are shut off from every interest outside, make the most of what they have ; and it would be ludicrous, if it were not sad, to see how they act and concern themselves about the merest trifles.

I have said that I did not know the financial state of the convent. It would be considered the height of impertinence for a novice to ask a question on this or any other subject. O religion, what outrages are perpetrated in thy name ! You were told that the "perfect novice" should be blind, deaf, and dumb,

an arrangement which was extremely convenient for a superior. Even the parents of those who enter convents are kept in ignorance of the state of the finances. They, as Catholics, have no right to ask either. It is supposed that the Church, through the bishop, will attend to all this. All you have to do is to give your money.

No parent would allow his daughter to marry into a family of whom he knew nothing, but he has no rights when the Church is in question. I was soon to know something of the financial affairs of the convent to my bitter cost ; and only my morbid state of indifference to everything around me prevented me from resenting what occurred.

I became very much attached to Mrs. O'Hagan. I should perhaps explain here that while in every other country in the world a sister is called either sister or mother, as her rank may be, in Ireland the sisters are all called "Mrs." so-and-so. The idea is the very absurd one, that people will have more respect for them.

Mrs. O'Hagan was of course simply Miss O'Hagan, but she was always called "Mrs." when spoken to by those outside, and when spoken of by the sisters to "seculars," the generic name for any one who was not a nun. Mrs. O'Hagan, like every diplomatic superior, knew how to distribute her favours, and I was the subject of many of them. I was granted the largest indulgence in every way. Indeed, the sisters and the convent doctor saw at once that my health would not stand any of the austerities which were then customary in that diocese, where there was real and severe fasting. In fact, it was past the endurance of most of the sisters. But the way of living in Ireland and England accounted for some of these

austerities, like the not eating of meat in the early Poor Clare convents in Italy, for so little meat was ever eaten that it made very little difference when it was restricted. Even in the families of the so-called upper classes in Ireland, at that time, the daily fare was poor compared with what was customary in the same class in England. Still, with the largest margin of allowance for national custom, the ordinary fare was almost fasting in Newry diocese, and the fasting was simple starvation or very near it. And yet these sisters were expected to be bright in the schools, and do their work as well as if they had been sufficiently fed. All this I may say is changed now, for the sisters have obtained dispensations from the severe fasting which was enforced at this time. The bishop who then governed the diocese was very old, and a man of herculean frame; he thought what he could do could be done by any one else. Sweeping changes have been made within the last two decades in the Roman Catholic Church in regard to fasting and abstinence; but though these changes had even then begun, he would not allow the sisters to benefit by them. He was soon succeeded by a bishop, since also dead, whose health was extremely delicate, and who had a little more mercy, so that dispensations were easily obtained. At the time I entered Newry Convent only one meal was allowed on fast days, which were numerous; and in Lent and Advent, and at that meal, a little bit of salt fish was the substitute for meat. Eggs were not allowed, except in rare cases. I am certain that a good deal of the quarrelling was caused by the state of health and nerves engendered by the want of proper food; but all this was, of course for the greater glory of God.

Mrs. O'Hagan had been making some additions to the convents and schools, and had got herself into debt. The arrival of the Sisters of Mercy had, to some extent, turned the tide of liberality in their direction, and she was in a terrible state of embarrassment. She had no personal friend who could help her. Lord O'Hagan was then a poor man. He had come from a very humble family, and had to work his way up ; besides, he was a man of strong common sense, and was just the very last person whom she would have wished to know anything of her troubles.

She knew I had some ready money, enough to clear her ; but she was in a difficulty, because, according to the rules of the Church, no novice is allowed to give any money to the convent, except what is necessary for her board and maintenance, until she has taken her final vows. It is of course the first duty of the superioress to see that all these rules are observed, and it is supposed to be the duty of the other sisters to report to the bishop if any irregularities take place. I say supposed, for as a general rule the sisters are either too indifferent, or too much afraid of the superior, to say a word, no matter what happens.

I was approached on the subject by a sister who was in Mrs. O'Hagan's confidence, and with the usual result. I certainly did not like to part with money until I was professed, but it was represented to me that this was only a temporary embarrassment, that it would be certainly paid back ; that it was not any of the principal of my money that was asked for, and so on. I yielded, and can very well understand how others have yielded under a similar trial. There was

a Sister Teresa there, not long professed, who was Mrs. O'Hagan's right hand. She did battle royal for her with the sisters who were in opposition. To strangers this woman was most attractive. They little knew what she was in the convent.

The matter was arranged. I gave the money required, but it did not end there. One of the sisters who was opposed to Mrs. O'Hagan heard of the affair, and reported it to the bishop. Alas for poor me ! This sister, who was so attached to Mrs. O'Hagan, thought that I had told the bishop, when, in fact, I had not said even one word to any one on the subject. The bishop, having assured himself that the matter was as he was told (it mattered very little to him from what source), stopped the building, ordered the money to be refunded to me, and gave Mrs. O'Hagan the reproof that she deserved, and I fear a little more, for her breach of rule. Of all this I was in profound ignorance, when Sister Teresa dashed into my cell, that place which we were told so often was so called because it was our earthly heaven ; and, I believe, if she could have beaten me to death she would have done so. Such a specimen of ungovernable fury I never saw. It was all in vain that I assured her that I had nothing to do with the matter. The bishop, I should have said, sent for me to the confessional, and explained to me that I should neither have been asked for the money nor allowed to give it, even if I had offered it. He spoke quietly and reasonably. He knew little of the tempers or doings which went on in the convent.

Of what use to say more ? I was to learn later what it was to be at the mercy of a woman of this class, for she made my life bitter indeed in Kenmare. It

is one of the great evils in convent life, but it is an evil which I think can be easily understood, that some sisters take violent attachments to a superioress. In fact, one might say they fall in love with them. The outcome is jealousy, the vilest and most mischievous passion, perhaps, of all. Woe to the poor sister who becomes an object of dislike, and above all an object of jealousy, to the sister who has fallen in love with a superior or a confessor ! As the confessor is only at hand occasionally, an undue attachment to him does not matter so much ; but as the superior is always there, it is indeed a bitter trial, above all when the jealous sister has any authority. This is sure to be the case. The superioress needs some one to come between her and many unpleasantnesses, and even if she dislikes the whole system she is in self-defence obliged to submit.

Still I was hopeful. The other sisters—many of them, at least—were sincerely kind to me, and I became attached to some of them, as any one with an affectionate nature will do. The sister who was mistress of novices was a lady and an educated person ; she did all she could for me, and tried to hide from me much of the evil which, as she knew, would shock me as it would not shock one who had been educated a Catholic. She eventually became superioress in Newry Convent, through the votes of her novices, whom she had attached to her while they were under her care. I heard the most extraordinary and painful stories of her government of the convent while I was in New York—not from Protestants, but from Catholics who knew the convent well, and had opportunities of knowing more than others. I can only hope these tales were not true ; but I fear those

who told me had but too good reason to be well informed. This lady is now dead, so what I say cannot harm her. To me, personally, she was always good and kind ; but I have since learned that girls who have been educated, as she was, in French convents, have not much idea of "pure and undefiled" religion ; but they are always very devout to the Virgin Mary. I do not wonder that France—Catholic France—has suppressed her religious houses when I have seen the result of French teaching.

Notwithstanding this episode, my profession was hastening. The bishop was very unwilling to have it before the usual time. As for me, by this time I had become indifferent. I saw day after day the most inconsistent conduct on the part of those sisters who made the highest profession of religion. I saw sisters go to Communion, which is supposed to be the most awful and solemn act which they could perform, after they had given way to the most violent tempers, and even abused the unfortunate superioress in the most violent language. I ought to have learned by this time that religion in the Church of Rome does not consist in virtue, but in devotecism, and in obedience to the Church. It is an easy religion for human nature.

Of course I was highly complimented by the sisters in general on the favour shown me in allowing me to be professed before the usual time. The usual time was two years ; but, according to the law of the Church, a novice who has worn the white veil for a year and a day is allowed to be professed, and the profession is valid. The day,—Heaven save the mark !—as the Irish say, is to "ensure that the full canonical time has been completed." So do they take

tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and omit the weightier matters of the law. I was, of course, the full canonical time. No one dare shorten that; though I have known strange things done which were not canonical at times. One moment after I had made my vows—which bound me for life, according to the teaching of Rome—I felt as if I would have given the whole world to have unsaid them; and I believe that this is not an uncommon experience. But who dare say one word of such feelings? Certainly I was not compelled in any way to take vows; but, all the same, I hated them the moment I had pronounced them. Later I may say that I felt very differently, and was as happy as I could have desired to be; but this was only for a very brief period.

There is a famous French writer whose books are well known to even Protestants. St. Francis de Sales is not always translated in full, but those who will be at the pains to search the French originals will find that in his time curious experiences in regard to religious profession were far from uncommon; and he had exceptional opportunities of information. He gives counsel to those who, after they had made their vows, found that they were mistaken in their choice. Of course, they were to persevere. He gives very remarkable and, under the circumstances, very wise advice to those who were forced by their parents to enter the cloister, showing that this was by no means uncommon at that day, as it would be again if Rome had power. He gives advice to prevent quarrels. He gives very ample instructions how to preserve peace in a convent, which is evidence that he must have had, as confessor to nuns, a good deal of experience

of their troubles; and other authorised writers on convent life confirm his statements.

Before I made my vows I was obliged to sign a "deed of gift," making over all my property to the convent. I did not know what a deed of gift was then. I know now, when in advancing years I have to earn my daily bread, and know that those who practically drove me out of a home by ceaseless cruelty have the enjoyment of all that ought to be mine.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KENMARE FOUNDATION.

“We look before and after,
And pine for what is not.”
HOOD.

“For their heart was not right with Him.”—PSALM lxxviii. 37.

THERE is a mighty stir in a convent whenever any change is pending. The absurd secrecy which is maintained about the merest trifle, and the monotony of the life, all combine to this end. At first there are rumours which lead to many a breach of the rule of silence, the less well informed trying to obtain information from those who are better posted. If convent life was the Christian life it would be a simple life. Why all this concealment? Why all this deliberate mystery? Partly, it is because human nature is human nature. It gives a certain air of distinction to those who are so high in the councils of the heads, that their approbation must be obtained and their advice solicited for everything. It serves as a very pleasant excitement for the younger ones to conjecture and wonder what the elders are doing or planning. I was a special favourite for obvious reasons just then, and, of course, admitted into council which the less favoured never even knew of. The result was, of course, jealousy more or less bitter; but I

came to know, before I had been many years in the "religious life," that this same jealousy is the curse of convent life, and does far more harm than could be supposed.

Archdeacon O'Sullivan was then the parish priest of Kenmare. He had brought sisters there of the Presentation Order, but he failed to agree with them. He was rather peculiar, but an excellent man. Mrs. Harnott, who was the superior of the convent, went by the name of "Old Fussy" amongst the children and the sisters; and the appellation, from all I have heard, suited her to perfection. She is long since dead, and, I trust, with the God whom, according to her lights, she tried to serve faithfully. But she was utterly unfit for a superioress or a guide of youth. In some cases sisters are appointed or voted into office because of the length of time which they have spent in the convent. Hence many troubles.

There was much lamentation when Father John peremptorily dismissed the Presentation sisters. But he was a man of action. He had also a weakness, and that was for a "lord." Miss or Mrs. O'Hagan's brother was not then a lord, but he was on the way to it. He had combined patriotism and loyalty to the English Government with an astuteness worthy of a better cause—a course which, if only successfully carried out, was sure to open every avenue of advancement to a Roman Catholic. He defended Fenian prisoners, but always contrived to leave the impression that he did so professionally, and, of course, was bound to do his best for his unhappy clients. All the time he worked with great tact for the Gladstonian Government, and was duly rewarded. He was, I think, the first Roman Catholic Lord Chancellor of Ireland. He was a

man of distinguished presence and courtly manner, admirably suited for the rôle which he played. Father John was always *au courant* of public affairs, and, strange to say, was something of a Conservative. He had received many favours from the Kenmare family, and this had attached him to the landlord interest, of which he was a steady supporter. He saw that to secure Mrs. O'Hagan was to secure her brother, for they were very warmly attached to each other. He went himself to Newry, saw Mrs. O'Hagan and the bishop of the diocese, and asked for a foundation.

There were reasons why the bishop was not unwilling to allow Mrs. O'Hagan to leave Newry. She was not a favourite with the older sisters, having got into office through the votes of the younger ones, who, to my personal knowledge, were shamefully bullied into voting for her—there is no other word for it—by the very sister who had treated me with such cruelty for a fault which, to use an Irishism, I never committed. She was, as a sister said to me one day, “a holy terror;” but she needed Mrs. O'Hagan, and Mrs. O'Hagan needed her, and they had formed practically a league offensive and defensive for mutual protection and advancement. And all this was done in the name of religion, and of what professed to be the highest state of perfection. But this is the rule in every convent. One elder sister has her partisans, another has hers, and woe to any unfortunate who comes to grief between the rival factions; or, if one side is notably weaker than the other, takes the weaker side. The older sisters were then very willing to get rid of Mrs. O'Hagan, but they were by no means so willing to allow me to go with her. She was determined to have me, and Father John had asked for me specially.

As for myself, I was supremely indifferent, and allowed the contending parties to fight it out as they pleased. I was fond of Mrs. O'Hagan, who, as I have said, could be very attractive to young people when it suited her. I had not had the full experience of Sister Teresa which I obtained, to my bitter cost, in later years. On the other side, I saw such miserable quarrelling amongst the elder sisters in Newry, that I thought I would find peace elsewhere—always the illusion of the inexperienced. The Newry sisters all liked me, however much they disagreed with each other; and I was much attached to some of them, especially to the lady (Miss Fottrel) who had charge of the novices, and who was spoken of for superior as soon as Mrs. O'Hagan vacated her post. This lady had sympathised with me sincerely in my troubles on the money question, and urged me strongly and honestly not to give it when I was asked; but of what use when I was so sorely pressed? And there are few who are willing to learn from the experience of others. She told me that her family were afraid to come to see her, they were so persecuted for money whenever they visited the convent, and so were others. The sisters were very well off, but this building craze, which Mrs. O'Hagan had to the very last, was her ruin, even physically.

I was pressed by both sides, but Mrs. O'Hagan gained the day, as she did generally. One reason why I decided to go with her was, that she had encouraged my literary work, and assured me that I should have every facility for continuing it in Kenmare. Also, that Father John was very anxious to secure me for the foundation, and I liked him, and had never reason to change the opinion of him which

I then formed. In fact, Father John was far more of a Protestant than could have been supposed. He hated the lying legends with which the Breviary is adorned, and told me many times that he always passed them over when reciting it. In order to do this, he was obliged to commit mortal sin; for every priest is obliged, under pain of mortal sin, to recite the Breviary every day, legends and all. But he had a conscience of his own, and there was no one living who could change it. No doubt if he had lived in times when Rome had power to persecute, he would have been consigned to the tender mercies of the Inquisition. At present, that institution has not the power which it expects to have, when Protestants, soothed to sleep by the blandishments of Rome and the lullaby of liberality, give her a little more of the liberty which she desires so much, so that she may be able to deprive them of their liberty. He made no secret whatever of his opinions, nor did he conceal the fact that he possessed a Protestant Testament, and used it—another mortal sin.

Some years before this some Christian people had sent a Protestant Testament to every priest in Ireland. I am afraid there were few indeed who kept it, and fewer who used it; but I know that Father John did. He also constantly denounced devotion to the saints, and abhorred the extravagant devotion to the Virgin Mary which is expected from every good Catholic. Christ truly was his all, and I trust he is with the God whom he loved and served so faithfully, according to his lights. His charities to the poor were only bounded by the limits of his purse. He had been left a good deal of money by the late bishop for charitable purposes, and he fulfilled the trust faithfully.

As I have not much more to say of Father John, I may conclude the subject here, as far as he is concerned. I know that it has been said by Romanists, and echoed by those so-called Protestants who try to discredit those who have left Rome, that I never agreed with any one. Now the fact is, that the very reverse is true. I think the remainder of this narrative will show that the disagreement was not on my side. It is one thing to be the victim and another thing to be the aggressor, and God alone knows to what an extent I was the victim. I can leave it to Him to defend me. I do not mind what Romanists say, for they must, of course, say something, and they have nothing else to say. But it is lamentable and disheartening to see Protestants falling into the snare of Rome, and trying to obtain a character for "liberality" at the expense of truth.

Father John was sincerely attached to me. According to the very ridiculous rule observed by the Irish Poor Clares, while we could, and did, allow strangers to go through the convent at any time, we could not go out of the grounds. Hence when Father John was dying he could not have the satisfaction of having one of the sisters to attend him, though he had been their friend and confessor for twenty years. During the last few weeks of his life, when his mind was failing him, he felt this privation very keenly, though he had every care from relatives who were devoted to him. During the last few days he fancied that I was with him. He used to say, "There is Francis Clare" (my name in the convent); "she would not leave me." It was no little comfort to me to know that I helped him even in imagination.

But I must return to Newry and our Kenmare

prospects. I knew, of course, that Mrs. O'Hagan had in view the large fund which I had brought into the convent in her desire to have me on the Kenmare foundation. Amongst other things, I had left a small sum of money for the support of a lay sister, but this the Newry sister would not give up. There was then a quarrel over some money which I had left, or had been told to leave, for masses. This Mrs. O'Hagan took with her to Kenmare, and when later I left it to found a convent at Knock it was refused. It was all right when she could get it for herself to take from Newry, but it was quite another matter when I wanted it. There was another sister very much advanced in years whom Mrs. O'Hagan did not want to have with her, though she had a large dowry, which she could have taken to Kenmare, but she was very peculiar. Poor soul, it was no wonder, for she had lived in the convent from the time she was sixteen, and knew nothing else. Her stay in Kenmare was, however, very brief. She insisted on coming, and as she had great power in Newry, and could have prevented Mrs. O'Hagan leaving it, Mrs. O'Hagan had to take her to Kenmare. Nor was she insensible to the advantage of her money. I was very much attached to this good sister, as she was to me. Her very simplicity would have made any one love her. But she could not bear Father John's "Protestant ways," as she used to call them. She had been brought up practically to worship the Virgin Mary, and was one of the greatest convent devotees I ever met. She did not agree with Father John, who made no secret of his opinions as to praying to the saints, and she soon returned to her first home. There was another sister who came with us also, who had a sad life indeed.

This young lady was a Miss Denvir, of Newry, and belonged to one of the best families there, who were then, at least, wealthy. She had been very well educated, and as she was not very young when she entered the convent, she could not bear the frivolous conversation, nor take any interest in all the little pettinesses going on around her. She soon got into bad repute. As long as Father John lived we had comparative protection, for he would not allow any tyranny, and saw to matters himself; but he was succeeded by another priest, of whom I shall have a good deal to say later. When Father Higgins succeeded Father John, he at once made both Miss Denvir and myself the objects of a system of the most contemptible petty persecution. He would not allow the other sisters to speak to us at any time. God alone knows all the cruel petty persecution which can be inflicted on a sister when she has in any way offended a superior, whether priest or reverend mother. Sister Mary Michael, for that was her name in "religion," was "sent to Coventry," and so was I, but we were not allowed any opportunity of mutual consolation. Now and then we could get a word with each other, but it was only now and then. She also objected strongly, as I did, to some familiarities which Father Higgins expected from the sisters. I must say now, once for all, that I know there was nothing criminally wrong, and that I know there is a wrong impression amongst some Protestants that there is a great deal of immorality in convents. I say here what I have said elsewhere, that at the present time there is nothing of the kind. A solitary case may occur, but such cases may occur in a private family. Anything like a system of immorality is unknown, and

much harm is done to the cause of truth when statements are made which are false, because false conclusions are drawn. I believe it has been a great help to Romanists to have stories related which have not one particle of foundation, because a reaction is sure to follow, and people say, "Oh, if these stories are false, there is nothing wrong in convent life." Thus a false system is propped up by the very persons who should be the first to suppress it. Because one great evil does not exist in convent life to-day, in those countries where public opinion would not permit it, we may not conclude that it has never existed. There is ample proof, as I have shown elsewhere, that this fearful evil did exist, and that Rome tried, and tried in vain, to suppress it, because the very nature of the convent system is such as to lead to evil. Whenever the Church is reformed in its moral tone, it is because of the Gospel light which is spread around. Wherever Rome has sufficient power, as she has to-day in Mexico, to prevent the spread of Gospel light, there evil flourishes and abounds. Further, if convent life is encouraged in this country, if Rome is allowed to carry out all her schemes, this worst of all convent evils will come into existence, as it has done before. Therefore, while it is the part of Christian wisdom not to make false accusations, it is a duty to remember that the evil which does not exist now may exist to-morrow, and it is for Christian people to take precautions which shall prevent its existence in this country. It would be indeed a fatal mistake to relax in vigilance because for the moment a danger is not apparent, when we know that it is only a question of

* See "Life Inside the Church of Rome," p. 239. Hodder and Stoughton.

time and opportunity for this very danger to raise its head once more.*

Sister Mary Michael and I both objected to the constant presence of Father Higgins in the convent. He wasted his own time, as well as the time of the sisters. Everything was subordinated to his convenience. He occupied the whole conversation at recreation, the only time the sisters have for a word with each other, and his favourites were allowed to speak, while no one else could say a word. In addition to this, he required the most menial services from the sisters. He spent his spare time, when not in the convent, in his garden, and as he was very

* While the above was being written, the paragraph appended below was published in the *Pall Mall Budget* of September 3rd, 1891. It is very important that such statements, made by such indisputable authority, should be well known and carefully noted. Of course Romanists will deny all these things; and when they are accused of immoralities in convents or elsewhere, they will declare that no such thing exists, that it would be impossible to exist in this country without its being known. This is quite true. Hence they are exultant when charges are made for which there is no foundation in this country, and hence, as I have already said, they say when these charges have been proved false, that charges made against them elsewhere are equally false. The truth is what we want. There is ample proof that immoralities such as are recorded below exist at present in countries where Rome has uncontrolled power. That they do not exist in England, simply proves that Rome is restrained, to some extent, by public opinion. Surely this makes the case even worse for Rome than if it could be proved that the same immoralities existed to the same extent in this country. If Rome will not, or cannot, control the morals of a nation where she reigns supreme, what reason have we to suppose that she would control her priesthood any better in this country, if she had all the power which she demands? The moral is plain: beware of giving Rome power, and never relax your vigilance for one instant.

“Hard by the Plaza de Armas is a vacant spot for ever accursed in Chilian eyes. Here a memorial figure, a woman’s, marks the site of the Church of La Compania de Jesus, the scene of the terrible

incapable as a gardener, he was constantly cutting his feet and ankles. Now and then he would take a reaping hook and trim his hedges. It would have been all very well if he had known anything of what he was doing, but he did not. The result was that he spent hours (and I use the word advisedly) in the convent parlour, where the sisters were obliged to bathe his feet in large vessels of water. I often wondered that he was not ashamed of such effeminacy. But he evidently expected these services. They were of almost daily occurrence. Once he sprained his hand, and a poor sister used to be kept for an hour at a time rubbing it, kneeling beside him, while he amused himself with a news-

holocaust of December 8th, 1868. When the fire was mastered, the remains of most of the victims, who mainly perished from pressure and suffocation, were found uninjured by the flames. They comprised members of the leading families of Santiago, the church being a most fashionable one. On the bodies being searched a number of letters of the most disgracefully compromising character, written by the priests whose penitents they were, were discovered. It is this, in addition to the selfish cowardice displayed by the clergy, who closed the gates leading into the sacristy, and thence into the open air, in order that they might be unhampered by fugitives in their task of saving the treasures of the church, that makes many a Santiagueno father and brother grind his teeth to this day when the sad story is alluded to that has done so much to shatter clerical influence in Chili. No more striking proof of this could be needed than the fact that the company never dared rebuild their church, while another is to be found in the strikingly altered demeanour of the populace during Holy Week. It is not so many years back that no vehicles were allowed to pass through the streets with passengers during this period, and that horsemen arriving from the outskirts were obliged to dismount and lead their beasts under pain of being dragged from the saddle and perhaps massacred by the mob. Black clothing was obligatory; the churches were filled with the offerings of the faithful, taking in some cases the form of all manner of decorative objects fashioned of dried fruits, chocolate, sweetmeats, and pastry; and daily processions of the clergy and religious confraternities."

paper. Father Higgins, who has since been made a bishop, and is now dead, knew well that both Sister Mary Michael and myself were utterly disgusted with all this, and we had to suffer accordingly.

I could have entered far more fully into this subject, but I hope what I have said will be sufficient to indicate what great evils may exist without being checked in convent life. It is a great mistake to think that such things are of trifling import. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The beginning of evil is like drops of water, making a slow but sure channel for a mighty river. If these things are done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry? If such evils can exist now unchecked, as I know to exist, though they are not apparently of the grievous kind which even to-day disgrace Catholic countries, where Rome has unlimited control, should we not see the germs of the danger, and carefully avoid fostering it? It should be enough for us that the evil fruit of an unscriptural system has already shown itself; it is our supreme duty to leave no effort unused to check the growth of what is so displeasing to our dear Lord, and which is the cause of such misery to our fellow-creatures.

I believe the devil has been the cause of having statements made that gross immorality exists in English convents, because he is the father of lies, and delights to gain his ends by lying, even in the apparent interests of truth. The grave harm caused by this lie cannot be over-estimated. Those who have been so deceived find out the deception; they become indifferent, and forget that the evil does exist elsewhere, and that it is their duty to leave no means unused to prevent its existence here. The evil one has

gained his point if he succeeds in making them relax their vigilance, or take less interest in the cause ; and I believe, from a long experience, that it is for this end he propagates the lie.

Sisters who are never allowed to read a paper, or to hear even a passing hint of what goes on in the world at large, never know of the existence of evils in the Church in other countries. They have read no Church history, except what has been carefully prepared and revised by Rome. Hence, as they know very well that while there are occasional cases of wrongdoing in this country, there are not constant or gross immoralities in convents, they shudder with horror at the statements which they are carefully told Protestants have made about them ; and this, as it is intended to do, drives them further from the truth instead of winning them to it. I would to God that I could induce Christian people to be wise in their dealings with Rome, for wisdom is needed as well as earnestness to save this country !

But I have anticipated in this part of my narrative. After a few years Sister Michael returned to Newry Convent. She was worthy of a better fate, and I do believe if she had been reached by Christian influences, that she might have been led out of Rome. But who was to open the door of Gospel truth for her ? Sisters of culture and refinement know very well that there are statements made and believed about them which are absolutely false, and utterly degrading ; this prevents them from even listening to one word from Protestants, which might otherwise be of great help to them. May God in His mercy give light to all, so that souls may be won to Him !

At length all was settled. Only the Last Day will

reveal all the heartburnings and sin which this foundation caused. Every one had some personal interest to serve, either in forwarding the plans of Mrs. O'Hagan or in hindering them, but she succeeded eventually. We set off from Newry by train. Some of the sisters had never seen a train—Mrs. O'Hagan for one. We were to remain for a day or so in a convent of the Order at Harold's Cross, Dublin, to enable Mrs. O'Hagan to see a doctor. I never could ascertain exactly what was the matter with her, but I know that a large sum was spent in medical advice for her. I think she was responsible for much of her illness herself, for she often refused to take the commonest precautions in regard to her health. Another of the many trials and, I may say, absurdities of convent life is that a superior is placed in a most painful position if she is in delicate health. The cares and anxieties of her office—no matter whether these cares are for the real good of the sisters, as they certainly were in the case of Mother Margaret, of Stone, or whether they were the fruit of ambition, as I think they were, to a large extent, in Mrs. O'Hagan's case—result the same way. So many sisters are jealous and watching for some cause of offence, that if a superioress takes even moderate care of her health it is commented on as a fault. If she takes "dispensations" which she would certainly give to a sister in equally delicate health, she is mercilessly condemned for it. What is she to do? In Mrs. O'Hagan's case she varied her course—at one time practising the most absurd austerities, and at another going to just the other extreme. A little common sense would have saved her years of ill-health.

Our journey to Kenmare was, on the whole, a pleasant one. We came by train to far-famed Killarney, and remained there a night, at the urgent request of the bishop, then Dr. Moriarty. He would have had us stay longer, and I very much wished to do so, but Mrs. O'Hagan would not hear of any delay. She had a nervous dread that something would be said or done that might in some way reflect on her; why I know not. I know that some of us had to pay dearly for her anxiety to appear as if she was very zealous for religious observance. The bishop's housekeeper, knowing we had a long drive before us, kindly prepared a good breakfast; but Mrs. O'Hagan put a veto on it, as far as we were concerned. She positively ordered the sisters not to touch meat or even eggs, though we had both in the convent. Her object was to impress the bishop with the austerity of our mode of living. I believe the bishop was not impressed; but what matter? Mrs. O'Hagan thought he was. Whatever was the motive, I know that I shall never forget the pangs of hunger which I suffered on that occasion. And the consequences were nearly proving fatal to me in my delicate state of health.

A curious incident occurred on the morning after our arrival in Killarney. Of course we had to assist at the bishop's mass before we partook of the limited breakfast which Mrs. O'Hagan allowed us. I noticed a very devout "altar boy," who I was told was preparing for the priesthood. I think he was about twelve years of age. He was a favourite with the bishop and every one else, and looked upon as a youth of great promise. The lad had heard already of my literary fame, and was, as boys would be, anxious to

shake hands with the authoress ; rather I should have said, as the authoress was a sister, he bethought him he would ask for her blessing. The favour, such as it was, he obtained. I never saw or heard of my youthful admirer for long years after, when I met him in New York, as the converted priest, Father O'Connor, well known and deeply respected. How little either of us could have imagined on that October morning what the future would bring forth for us !

How often have I thought, What if I had decided to remain in Newry Convent ? What a long chain of important events depended on my decision ! I believe that God has His own designs even when we least suspect it, and leads us in the way He would have us go, if we are not opposing His will, even when we are unconscious of His leadings.

CHAPTER X.

SOME INCIDENTS OF CONVENT LIFE.

“Oh, sad the waking from the dream !
Oh, sad the fond illusion vanished !
Oh, lonely life—oh, lonely heart,
Where every lawful joy is banished !”

ANON.

“For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth.”—PSALM lxxii. 12.

WHEN we arrived in Kenmare we found a state of things for which none of us were prepared, unless indeed Mrs. O'Hagan may have had some information ; but if she had, it was known only to her special follower, Sister Teresa. If she knew it, she made it one of the convent mysteries in which the souls of superiors delight. We found that the people of Kenmare, and especially the school children, were very much attached to the sisters who had just left, and that they resented, as only Irish people can resent, the intrusion. This placed us in a very unpleasant position. But Father John was not a bad general. He knew his people, having been for so many years their parish priest. He was greatly beloved ; and, if the truth must be told, he was greatly feared. Perhaps this was one cause of the affection that was felt for him.

There were ringleaders, as there always are in all revolts, small or large ; and he knew, if these could

once be brought over to the right side, all would be well. He took a very wise way of proceeding. He flattered the vanity of these poor peasant girls, for they were little else. He assured them that they would receive special consideration from the sisters, and hinted that if they wished to enter the convent eventually he would provide for them. This was very tempting. I believe it would be almost impossible, as I have said elsewhere, for any but an Irish Catholic to understand the value set by the poorer class of Irish on having a son a priest or a daughter a nun. It is to them a patent of nobility far more than a religious advantage. The priest has always lorded it in Ireland ; hence the exalted position of the relatives of the priest. Of course the nun has also her influence in affairs if she becomes prominent in her order ; and where is the fond mother who does not expect that her son will be a "bishop yet, alanna," and her daughter is sure to be eventually a rev. mother ?

The bait took, and the two malcontents, like many another of their class, were prepared to lead their companions after them, and did so. We reaped an immediate advantage ; but, alas for the future ! These girls were overvalued in the beginning, and, like all persons of their class, took airs on themselves later, and tried to rule where they should have served. They would be best described as ignorant, semi-educated girls. They had never been beyond their native village, and had no enlarged educational advantages, while they had a national school education, which they, in their natural ignorance, thought at least equal to an Oxford professorship. Having been for some years in the national schools, they knew every lesson by heart ; and, as far as the requirements of that system of

education went, they were letter-perfect. How could such girls be fit to prepare the young for life in a world of which they had no personal experience, or to give their pupils anything but the most superficial education in subjects which were of little use to them in their future life?

I saw from the first why the national system of education failed in the hands of the sisters. They had not the added experience of secular teachers, who could enlighten their scholars on subjects perhaps apparently unimportant, yet of the greatest moment.

The sister whom I spoke of as having returned very promptly to Newry Convent was simply horrified at the state of affairs in Kenmare. She had been accustomed to a convent where she was surrounded by high walls; where doors were locked every night, as if an attack of robbers were expected hourly; where everything was done by rule to the moment. Here in Kenmare we found on our arrival that, whatever the convent might be in the future, it was then chaos; and we had to live in a cottage until it was completed. This cottage was certainly not built for a "religious" house. There were no bolts or bars, not even a lock to the hall door. All the same, the farce of enclosure was kept up. One night Sister Aloysius got more than usually alarmed at our unprotected state, and cried out in time of silence, regardless of rule and every other consideration, "Sister, lock the key, and bring the door in with you"—a saying which she was never allowed to forget by us mischievous young ones.

It may be best to speak here of the literary work which I accomplished while I was in Kenmare. It is even now an amazement to me how I accomplished

all I did, considering the painful difficulties under which I had to work. At first Mrs. O'Hagan was greatly taken with the idea of my literary work, and saw that it would be a credit to the convent ; and she very soon found that it would bring in a considerable revenue, for I had suggested that we should be our own publishers, so that we got all the profit. My books soon became known as the "Kenmare Publications," and in consequence I became known as "The Nun of Kenmare." The origin of this title I had nothing whatever to do with. It was conferred on me, I might say, by public acclamation, as will be seen later in the chapter on the famine. Many gentlemen came to see me during the famine year of 1879. They used to ask for the Nun *at* Kenmare, it being easier to remember me by that name than by my convent name. This eventually dropped into asking for the Nun *of* Kenmare. Poems, far too laudatory for me to publish here, were addressed to me even by such men as Denis Florence McCarthy and others under this title ; so that at last I became known by this name only. As long as I remained a Roman Catholic Romanists gave it to me so freely that I was rarely ever spoken of by any other name. Publishers who reproduced my books in America and on the continent of Europe also took up the name, so that I have been obliged to use it, even since I left the Church of Rome, in order to be identified. If Roman Catholics take exception to this appellation, they should have done so before it became too general to change.

I have said that I had begun to write at a very early age. My first Catholic work of any importance was written in Newry. It was "The Life of St. Francis of Assisi," a saint to whom I have already

referred as pre-eminently Christian in his way of living and working for the poor. This was the first life of the saint written in English, others being poor translations of pious compilations. The Roman Catholic Church requires that no book shall be published on any subject whatever which has not first obtained the *imprimatur* of the bishop of the diocese. He generally deposes a priest to read such books as are presented to him for approval. Of course a sister is specially bound by this regulation. For the general public it remains at present a dead letter. But, all the same, the rule exists, and will be sternly enforced when Rome has the power of enforcing. I may be blamed for repetition ; but I have had so many proofs of the ignorance of Protestants, and even of many Romanists, on this and kindred subjects, that I wish, even by repetition, to draw attention to matters which are of such profound importance. Rome has not changed ; she cannot change without ceasing to be Rome ; but she cannot always exercise all her powers. Pray do not think she has abrogated or retracted even the least of her claims to the abject obedience of mankind. Far from it ; she exercises all the authority she can to-day. She is well pleased that you should think that she would not do more. This serves her purpose all too well. You think she has become "liberal," and that, having changed so much, she will change still more, while she is only waiting for the power which she is cajoling you into giving her, in order to enact again all the bloody work of the Inquisition. Every fresh pronouncement of Rome is another proof that she has not changed. Why, then, will the world believe that she has changed ?

At present she can only compel sisters and priests

to submit to her rule of obtaining an *imprimatur* before they publish any work. If space permitted, I could tell some facts as to her dealing with priests on this subject, when they have dared to utter a word which did not square with the Pope's views of his power to rule in temporals as well as in spirituals.

My life of St. Francis was submitted to the priest who had recommended my entrance to Newry Convent, as the sisters wished to pay him a compliment for his good offices. I had no objection, for I thought he was at least a gentleman. But Rome sorely deteriorates her converts, a painful fact which has been noted again and again. An Oxford gentleman, when converted into a Jesuit Father, becomes a sorry spectacle. This priest required very little alteration in the work ; and, indeed, I was pleased to have that help which even an old author can best appreciate. The sisters who were in Mrs. O'Hagan's favour asked me to dedicate the book to her, and I willingly acceded to their request. She had given me every facility for writing the work ; and having herself intellectual tastes, if she had not gifts, I wished to do all I could to please her ; but I was quite unprepared for the storm which broke on my unhappy head in consequence. Father A—— thought, or rather demanded, that the book should be dedicated to him. He declared that it was his more than mine, and that I had no right to ignore him. He was, like some of his brethren, a man of an overbearing temperament, who exalted himself in the name of the Church, and while he seemed to refer all to that authority, in reality he was as many priests are, a little Pope himself.

The end of the matter was that the book was

dedicated to Mrs. O'Hagan, the desire of the sisters to have the compliment paid to her overpowering even their sense of obligation to the priest. But I was never forgiven, though I had absolutely no voice in the matter. He wrote me a letter which was amusing for its absurdity, in which he said: "Obedience, how thy name is abused!" This was because I wrote him a letter which I hoped would have had the effect of pacifying him, saying what was the truth, that I had no voice in the matter, and had acted according to obedience. I found that obedience was all right when it was paid to him, but that it was all wrong when it was paid to my lawful superiors. I met some others of his way of thinking later, who had it in their power to make me suffer for offending them.

These things may not seem very important, but in reality they are evidences of what is of the greatest importance. Much of the cruelty of which Rome has been guilty, and has the persecution of her Brunos and Galileos, has arisen from the same cause—the jealousy of ignorant priests or prelates, who have had it in their power to crush an intellect which they could not rival. It is because Rome is intolerant of liberty that she persecutes, in the name of God, those to whom He has given the gifts for whose exercise liberty is as necessary as the sunshine is for the perfection of the fruit.

This life of St. Francis was at once seized on by a priest in the United States, and published there by him, without the slightest reference to my wishes. In fact, he did not even condescend to inform me of his intention, and of course he did not offer me any compensation. I am aware that the absence of

copyright gave him a legal liberty to act thus ; but what of the boasted love of sisters who are praised so highly when it suits the purpose of the ecclesiastic, and as freely plundered when plundering is considered safe ?

My next book was the "Life of St. Clare." This book was also the first work which gave more than the briefest sketch of her history. I have already related how much I was deceived in this matter. It may well be a caution to those of the Ritualist party who devour Roman Catholic legends with such eagerness, without a thought of criticism. The fascination of a religious romance is indeed great ; but when romance is substituted for historical fact, and when dogma is based on this foundation, it is a deceit which deserves the severest reprobation.

I also wrote several histories of Ireland, one of these being a school history for Longmans' "Student" series. In regard to this matter also, I found that the previous histories of Ireland, while some of them, such as D'Arcy Magee's, had great merit, were, for the most part, mere dry compilations from more or less doubtful sources. Dr. Stokes and others had begun to publish the intensely interesting documents which yet remain regarding ancient Irish history, and Protestant intelligence did for Catholic Ireland what Roman Catholic slavery would never have permitted. It is a notorious fact that Father O'Hanlon was looked on with very little favour by ecclesiastical authority when he began to issue his series of lives of the Irish saints—a series which was a marvel of linguistic and topographical erudition. "Hell open to Christians," and especially to Protestants, by Father Furness, was far more acceptable. The latter work

suited the genius of Rome far better than any subject which might tend to intellectual culture, and thus to liberty of thought.

We were now settled in the new convent. It was quite large enough for all practical purposes, but Mrs. O'Hagan was by no means content. She insisted in having large additions, and for these I had to pay out of the proceeds of my publications. So much money came in from this source, that as much as £500 was spent on one addition alone. But this did not satisfy the rapacity of the sisters (I can use no other word).

Of course, according to the vow of poverty which I had taken, any money which I earned ceased to be mine. But there are some special regulations, even in the Catholic Church, by which some respect is shown to the author, be he monk or nun. All these were set at defiance in my case, and what was worse, the sisters began to treat me cruelly. It seemed to me that the more I did for them the more they desired to annoy me and hinder my work, though it was for their own benefit. Jealousy was again at the bottom of all this. While sisters are not all cruel to each other, and while some are even kind in sickness or trouble, the whole tendency of convent life is to engender a spirit of unnatural cruelty; and where there is the power to inflict daily torment on others, it is too often in human nature to do so.

The case of Miss Saurin may be remembered by some of the readers of this narrative. The history which she gave of contemptible and cruel petty persecution has not and could not be denied, and countless such cases could be given to the public if the victims dared or were willing to speak.

Bishop Moriarty was a large-minded and generous-hearted gentleman. He was a man to whom any kind of cruelty would have been abhorrent, but such men are rare in the Romish Church. The love of tyrannising grows with the power to tyrannise ; hence there are few priests and few bishops who are not tyrants, as far as they have power. When Bishop Moriarty found that I was likely to produce quite an extensive literature, he wished to do everything to facilitate my work. He constantly gave me approbations for publication, the following being one of those which I most prized. It was published at the date named, and frequently at later periods.

“THE PALACE, KILLARNEY, *October 24th*, 1876.

“MY DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST,—I learn that you are issuing some new works, and some new editions of those already published. Your literary labours reflect honour on your convent, on your order, and on your diocese.

“But I rejoice much more in this, that you are contributing to supply some of our greatest needs—a Catholic Literature. I know, too, that the funds realised by the sale of your works are exclusively devoted to the service of religion.

“Praying God to bless you, and to preserve your health and strength, yours sincerely in Christ,

+ “D. MORIARTY.

“To SISTER M. FRANCIS CLARE, Convent of Poor
Clares, Kenmare, County Kerry.”

During this period I was publishing my books myself, and devoting the profits to the convent. At first I gave employment to Roman Catholic printers only, but I soon found it was quite hopeless to get them to

do business steadily. There are, no doubt, some quite respectable men of this class, but I was unable to find them. One Roman Catholic printer came down to Kenmare from Dublin without my knowing his intention until he arrived. He implored me, actually on his knees, to give him employment ; which I was most unwilling to do from past experience, but I yielded at last to his entreaties.

Before the work was half finished he got into financial difficulties, and as I refused to pay him until his order was completed, he went to the then Archbishop of Dublin, and told him I had refused to pay him. The archbishop had no right to interfere in this matter, as no bishop has a right to interfere with sisters in the diocese of another bishop ; but I seemed marked out for any annoyance that could be inflicted on me. One cause of constant trouble in the Roman Catholic Church is, that any one who has a prominent position, literary or political, is constantly brought before ecclesiastical authority by those who imagine themselves annoyed or injured by him.

The amount of petty persecution to which a person can thus be subjected can be easily understood. These complaints are received by the bishop as a sort of compliment to his position and authority, and he receives the complainants as the Pope receives the requests of kings and emperors to arbitrate in their affairs. These things cause many serious heartburnings which are never known outside, because the least display of resentment is put down at once, and called "disloyalty to the Church."

On this occasion I lost my patience ; which, perhaps, was the best thing I could have done under the circumstances, for it saved me a good deal of future

annoyance. I wrote to the archbishop, and told him quite frankly, but of course respectfully, that it was not his business to interfere, and that he did not understand the case, for the man had forced me to employ him and then broken his own agreement. For years afterwards, and for all I know to this day, this incident was reported all over Ireland and England, and was given as another proof of my disposition to disagree with ecclesiastical authority.

I had an amusing experience of priestly interference in my literary affairs while I was in Knock. A priest wrote a letter to the press accusing me of heresy, for some statements that I had made in a little pamphlet which I had published. The fact was, that this pamphlet was simply a translation from the works of a canonised saint, and I had so stated on the title-page, which he seemed to have overlooked. As I merely replied by referring him to the Latin original from which I had translated, he was completely confounded; and as he became the joke of the diocese for his ignorance of what any priest should have known, he did not feel very grateful to me. He became, in consequence, still more my enemy. It is, indeed, a saying among Catholics, that "a priest never forgives." This is one of the many reasons why Catholics are so afraid to say a word against a priest, no matter what cause they may have for saying it.

One Scotch priest, of whom I shall have to say more later, at an utter loss to do something which would injure me, took exception to an expression I had used in one of my religious books which was capable of two meanings; at least, by a good deal of distortion. Of course, he used the distortion he made against me, and made a sense of the passage

which I never intended, and no one but himself would ever have suggested. He caused me a great deal of trouble, which was just what he desired to do. His dislike to me was the usual one of literary jealousy, to which was superadded a desire to pose as the friend of Irish landlords. They might have had a more creditable protector.

As I was my own publisher, and had to see to all the business arrangements, it will be easily understood that my work was something overwhelming. In order to facilitate it, Dr. Moriarty arranged that I should have a separate account in the bank, and empowered me to do all the business without any reference to the superioress. I will do Mrs. O'Hagan the justice to say that she had the common sense and humanity to see that this was absolutely necessary. But the ignorant and uneducated class of sisters for whom I was working had very different views. When I say ignorant, I do not mean that they were without education, such as a national school could give them, but this was all the education they had, and they had never mixed in society of any kind ; in fact, they were from the very humblest class, and were, at one time, coming to school with bare feet. They had never even had a passing glimpse of any other place but their native village. Such persons could not have enlarged minds, and were therefore just the persons to be victims of the meanest vices and petty jealousies, perhaps without much blame to themselves. They were narrow-minded by education and circumstances, and they were placed in a system which was well calculated to increase all this evil ; while their knowledge, little as it was, helped to add fuel to the smouldering flame. They supposed, because they

knew well all that the national system could teach, that they knew everything ; and because they were necessarily given a prominent place in the schools, that they were capable of ruling elsewhere. Though their ignorance was the cause of much trouble to me, I could not help being amused at it. They knew that large sums of money were constantly coming in from the sales of my books, and they supposed that every penny should go direct to the convent funds. It was in vain that I tried to explain to them that the printer should be paid first. Even Mrs. O'Hagan had no consideration on this subject. She often came and deliberately took from me the money I had laid by to pay for publishing, and left me to give bills to those whom I employed. I asked them at least to allow me to pay half before they claimed a share, but I never could obtain this concession. How much all this annoyance added to my cares may well be imagined. Nor could they be made to understand the heavy expenses of printing, advertising, etc. Every penny spent in this way was literally supposed to be so much taken from the convent, and instead of being grateful for the large profits realised and handed over to them, I was bitterly reproached.

Besides this, I greatly needed help in the clerical part of my business ; and it was not till I had suffered long, and that they at last realised they might kill the goose which brought the golden eggs, that I was allowed to have a regular secretary.

Before I leave this subject, I may add that I saw a letter from Father Higgins to a bishop, who kindly sent it to me, in which he said, that if the money which was invested in the funds from the profit of my publications were taken from the Kenmare Con-

vent, it would be ruined ; and yet it shows what Rome is, when I am obliged to say that I received from these sisters, with a few exceptions, nothing but ingratitude ; and to strangers visiting the convent since I left, they have had nothing to say but evil of me. This has been told me by Catholics in the United States who had visited Kenmare, and who left the convent parlour in disgust, and told the sisters plainly what they thought of the return which they made me. Yet with all this, the sisters traded largely on my name when I left, and it is not too much to say, that neither they nor Kenmare would ever have been heard of but for the Kenmare publications.

I may add, as I wish to say no more on this painful subject, that there was scarcely a sister in the convent whose friends I had not helped, both with money and influence. Those for whom I did the most were the most bitter against me. I found a happy contrast when travelling in Canada, but the lady who acted so differently was a Protestant. During the famine of 1879 I helped a Protestant family, the children of an officer then dead. They had but a trifle to live on, and when famine and sickness came their fate was sad indeed, as they were ladies of refinement and culture. I do not remember now what I did for them, but I know it was far less than what was done for the relatives of the sisters.

When travelling in Hamilton (Ontario), I accidentally went to the temperance hotel which is kept by one of these ladies, who had married and emigrated. After the lapse of so many years I did not recognise her at first, nor had I heard of her marriage ; but she had heard I was coming, and at once made herself known to me. I have often said, that all the bread

which I have thrown on the waters of life has come back to me in a very mouldy condition ; but it was not so in this case. I never received such a welcome. The best room in the house was prepared for me, and I was not allowed to make even the least return.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FAMINE YEAR OF 1879.

“And the babe lay dead at the breast of the mother,
And the mother cried, ‘O God, how long?’”

D. F. MCCARTHY.

“And the King shall say unto them, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”
—MATT. xxv. 40.

SURELY I have good reason to remember the famine year of 1879. Who needs to be told that Ireland is in a chronic state of famine and distress? Who needs to be told that since Pope Andrian handed Ireland over to England by papal bull and by his infallible authority, in return for a payment of Peter’s Pence, Ireland has been in a state of constant misery? Unhappy Ireland! and yet the Irish all over the world are the best support, both temporally and spiritually, of the Pope.

Truly, they are a marvellous people.

One thing is historically certain: the Holy See has always thrown its strongest support on the side of England, and England is well aware of this, and necessarily makes it an important element in her political calculations.

I am well aware that the statement which I am about to make will not be very acceptable to a certain class of politicians, but the question is if what I say

is true, and not if it is unpleasant. The Holy See has been always ready to sell the interests of any nation which she can control religiously for the interests of the Church, and this is one secret of her power. She is well aware that she can compel submission from her unhappy children at the peril of their salvation, but when she desires a favour from a political power she has to offer her bait. It is amazing that England has not yet realised that she can never govern Ireland successfully through Rome, long as she has tried to do so.

As my name and fame, such as it was, as the "Nun of Kenmare," had spread over the world, I was naturally appealed to for help by the poor, and naturally also those who knew how dire the distress was were anxious that the funds which they sent should be carefully administered. Money was sent to me for distribution from all parts of the world, and later I often received several hundred letters a day. I was obliged to have the assistance, when the post came in, of at least three sisters to open letters and reply to the contributors. I shall leave it to others to tell what good was accomplished through my instrumentality. It is one of the happiest recollections of my life, that I was enabled to help so many who were in such grievous need, and I can say truly that but for the jealousy of the sisters, and the opposition of priests, I could have established a permanent work which would have tended not a little to the pacification of Ireland.

It is not generally known, but it should be said, that the Roman Catholic landlords are the very worst in Ireland. I made this statement long since, and my statement was published, so it cannot be said

now that I have started this opinion because I have left the Church of Rome. I not only stated the fact, but I gave ample evidence of it, and evidence which has not been disputed. The poor Irish, clinging with a touching fidelity to their faith and to the "old master," put up with treatment from a landlord because he was a Romanist which they would not have tolerated in a Protestant.

But the famine of '79 enlightened them. Hence the murder of the Catholic Burke, and many others. Only that the Irish hierarchy, with few exceptions, have opposed the political tyranny of Rome, I have little doubt that the same bullet which sped its way to a Burke would have found its way to a priest, if a little more provocation had been given. One case I well remember; it was in the county Sligo, where a Roman Catholic lady would not allow her starving tenants to gather sea-weed when they had no other food to eat without a tax on their labour. Between the influence of agitators, who for the most selfish purposes would not allow tenants to pay who could pay, and the heartlessness of landlords who wanted tenants to pay who could not do so, the country had come to a miserable state. It will so continue until some Christian statesman rises in the might of the Lord, and declares that Ireland shall not be governed by the Pope, or by selfish landlords or patriots, but on Christian principles. When that day comes Ireland will indeed be free, and will rise up and call her deliverer blessed.

I took a very active part in public affairs at this time of necessity, and as long as the need lasted, and large sums of money (nearly £20,000) came in through my instrumentality, I was the "Nun of

Kenmare" indeed,* and praised for more than I was worth. But as soon as I left the Roman Catholic Church all was changed. What a poor religion it must be which makes ingratitude necessary for its support! I have, however, the great consolation of knowing that there are yet thousands of Catholics who love me, and are grateful for what God permitted me to do for them. Even as I write I have had a touching letter from a poor family in Dublin whom I had helped, and I have received many such.

English Catholics have always been denouncers of Ireland. If a history were written of their efforts to undo that hapless country, it would make a curious and interesting volume. They would not thank O'Connell for the freedom which he obtained for them, because in freeing them he also freed Ireland. It must be said, however, that O'Connell had no special love for them. The Pope has always taken the side of the English Catholic, because he has been led to believe that he will thus best secure the patronage of England, and probably he is not far astray. But it is strange that a power which claims to be so strong spiritually is always in such urgent need of the help of an arm of flesh. When crossing the Atlantic Ocean lately, I had many conversations with an Irish gentleman,

* The *Catholic Weekly Register*, noticing recently an article of mine on "Mr. Stead and the Pope," hints that I had no right to the name of the "Nun of Kenmare," for the very silly reason that I was not the only nun of Kenmare. It so happened that, looking over old papers just after I had read this remark, I found the following; it is an extract from a review of one of my books in that paper, written of course when no one thought of calling me by any other name: "This magnificent volume, 'The History of the City and County of Cork,' forms one of the most remarkable works for which we are indebted to the indefatigable pen of the Nun of Kenmare."

who is rich and prosperous in his new country. He was very eager to induce me to reconsider my position, and offered me many advantages if I would go back to Rome. Yet for all that he denounced the Pope as I never heard him denounced by even the hottest Orange man. "Ireland is ruined," he exclaimed one day, "and she has been ruined by the Queen and the Pope; and of the two the Pope is by far the worst." But to return to my own narrative. I soon found that it was by no means a path of roses to work for Ireland. The English Catholic landlords were very angry. It was their *rôle* to assert that there was no distress in Ireland, when the people, as I knew too well, were actually starving. They lived out of the country, and cared very little for it, except to get their rents. There were of course a few exceptions, but they were few. As I could not very well be attacked in the public press for helping the poor, they took up the cry that I was "interfering in politics." God help me, all the politics I cared for was to feed the hungry. But so that I could be silenced when I said there was distress was all they cared for.

The Kenmare Convent was situated on Lord Lansdowne's estate. Mr. (now Sir Charles) Russell came to Ireland to look up matters for political purposes. He was sent to me by the then bishop, Dr. McCarthy. I told Mr. Russell what I knew, but as we were not allowed to leave the convent grounds, my information was necessarily secondhand. I begged of him to investigate matters for himself, which he did, and wrote pretty sharply as to the result of his personal observations. Although I had merely acted as I was requested to do by my bishop, I was blamed all round.

Many Irish landlords lived principally in England, and rarely ever visited Ireland; they came only to economise or to get their rents from their tenants, which rents they spent in England or on the Continent. Now, if all the money which is got in any place is taken from that place and expended elsewhere, how is that place to prosper?

If saying this was interfering in politics, then I must plead guilty of having interfered in politics. It seems to me, however, it was not a question of politics; it was a question of humanity.

Lord Lansdowne's brother, Lord Fitzmaurice, took up the dispute on his brother's behalf, but, being a gentleman, he wrote as a gentleman.

A Scotch priest, the Rev. Mr. Angus, took up the quarrel for the English Catholics; and whether they selected him, or he selected them for this office, I do not know. This poor priest had neither property nor friends in Ireland, and his only qualification for his interference in other people's affairs was presumably his ignorance of the country, and a natural inclination to pose as an important person.

As I was a woman and a nun, I was an easy prey. It would be necessary for me to write a volume if I gave a complete history of his impertinent interference in my private affairs, and he is not worth it. But he did all the harm which persons of his class can generally do.

His attacks on me in the English Catholic papers were so gross that Archbishop Croke at last interfered, and so far silenced him that they were obliged to refuse him space in their columns for his calumnies. These papers, at least one of them, were very dependent on Irish support; and though it did not

matter to have a sister attacked for taking the part of the poor, it was quite another matter when a Catholic archbishop interfered.

The storm was quieted for a time, and the meddlesome priest silenced, but it was only for a time. The following amusing letter will show that he needed occupation, and I most sincerely wish he could have found it in some other way besides interfering with me.

"DEAR SISTER MARY FRANCIS,—It may be consoling for you to learn that Father Angus, your last defamer in the *Weekly Register*, is merely an amateur West London priest.

"He was formerly an Anglican parson, and what works of mercy or missionary duty he did as such I am not aware; but as a Catholic priest I know that, if you reckon in Ireland among the works of mercy a chaplaincy to an old lady, with the additional 'missionary duty' of having to air her pug dog every evening in Kensington garden, he will obtain a high place among the saints of heaven.

"Believe me, yours faithfully,

"PHILIP P. PURCELL, *Priest*.

"P.S.—You are at liberty to use this letter.

"LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, LONDON, W.C., *December 12th, 1881.*"

This priest next commenced a series of attacks in the London *Morning Journal*. The editor, little supposing that a priest would make upon a sister an attack which was false from end to end, allowed him space. As this priest was at that time in Cardinal Manning's diocese, I appealed to him for protection from his persecutions, and my appeal was received

with his usual kindness, but it was useless. Father Angus was one of those people who are always anxious to interfere in the affairs of others, and to play the *rôle* of director, but who would not submit to his own superiors.

Cardinal Manning's secretary wrote to me saying that Mr. Angus had again promised to discontinue his libels. But I seemed to have an irresistible attraction for him.

A letter of Archdeacon O'Sullivan, who was then and is now the parish priest of Kenmare, will show what was thought of his conduct by those who had a right to advise me. I give his letter here :—

“HOLY CROSS, KENMARE, *May 13th, 1882.*

“MY DEAR SISTER M. F. CLARE,—I have waited till I finished my stations to answer your welcome letter. I am glad to hear that you are succeeding in your noble undertaking, notwithstanding the many obstacles *Old Nick* is putting in your way.

“I was greatly annoyed at the attack made on you by the Scotch or English priest, Father Angus. Did this man imagine he was called to do the work of Irish bishops and priests who ought naturally to look after and correct Irish nuns, if they were going astray?

“I sincerely sympathise with you in the many heavy trials you have had to endure since you left Kenmare.

“You may remember I was opposed to your leaving ; however, I knew if you were convinced that you were called to found a convent at Knock, nothing could deter you.

“Horrible business, the murder of Lord Cavendish

and Burke. A feeling of sickness comes over me when I think of it. Will Ireland ever outlive the villainy of her own sons?

“Accept the enclosed five pounds as a small token of my sincere regard for you, and the noble work you are engaged in. I truly regret my means don’t permit me to make the offering a hundred times greater.

“With warmest wishes for your happiness here and hereafter, believe me, my dear Sister M. F. Clare,

“Ever sincerely yours,

“M. O’SULLIVAN, P.P.”

I should explain that there were two Archdeacon O’Sullivans in Kenmare at different times. The first Archdeacon O’Sullivan was the “Father John” who brought us to Kenmare, and whose death was such a grievous loss to me. The extent of the work in which I was engaged will be seen from the following extracts from letters addressed to me by those to whom I sent relief. I published a printed report of the funds which I distributed, with the names and amounts given and received, for those who had entrusted their money to me. One of these little pamphlets is still in my possession, and I give some extracts from the contents. The fund was called the Nun of Kenmare’s Famine Fund. I think a comparison between the honours heaped on me at this time, and the way in which I have been treated since, is a painful evidence of the un-Christian character of the Roman Catholic Church. It certainly ought to open the eyes of those who try to persuade themselves that Rome is ready to fraternise with Protestants.

It is a deep and painful lesson to me of the ingratitude of human nature.

When the distressed state of the country was known, funds poured in from all parts of the world ; and as I had a very large correspondence, and was well known, through my writings, in Australia and India, as well as in America, it was natural that money should be sent to me for distribution. Some people doubted public committees and other mediums of distribution, and they thought I would know best when and where to expend their charity for them.

Unless a place was specified, as often happened, by the donors, where they wanted the money spent which they sent me, I distributed it as fairly as possible wherever I knew it was most needed. I felt it to be a most sacred trust, and tried to fulfil it as sacredly and carefully as possible.

One of my objects was, while helping for the present, to provide for the future. The potato, being the staple food of the Irish people, had degenerated, and new seed was most urgently needed. Indeed, the principal cause of the distress was the failure of the potato crop, and the inferior quality of the seed.

A clergyman of the Episcopal Church sent me a dozen potatoes, from a parish near Cork, in a letter. They were about the size of marbles ; and these, he said, were all the people had to live on.

A gentleman, writing to the *Bolton Guardian*, England, said :—

“ It is not long since an important letter appeared in a London contemporary under the heading ‘ Distress in Ireland.’ It was from the pen of Miss Cusack, the well-known nun, Sister Mary Francis Clare, of

the convent, Kenmare, County Kerry. I cannot introduce my present subject better than by citing one or two sentences from that letter. Miss Cusack says she knows, at this moment, families of comparative respectability who live on dry bread and tea. As to meat of any kind, it is an unknown luxury. As for the poor labourers, Indian meal is their sole subsistence. Few of us in England know what Indian meal is. It may be described as a coarse and watery apology for food which was introduced into Ireland at the time of the famine, and which has lingered in the markets ever since as a sort of alternative against starvation. No millowner in Bolton would consider it good enough for his horses.

“Miss Cusack gives the case of a poor woman who came to the convent to her the other day and confided her circumstances to her. The poor woman's husband had just recovered from fever, his head was swollen, and he was not able to work. She had three children who were receiving education in the free school of the convent, and the poor mother begged, for the love of God, ‘we would give her a stone of Indian meal a week.’

“‘A stone of Indian meal a week,’ exclaims Miss Cusack, ‘and nothing else, for a family of five.’ If this is not poverty, I know not what poverty is. Fourteen pounds of Indian meal a week, and nothing else, for a family of five! Two pounds of Indian meal a day for five persons, of whom one is recovering from fever, and where there are three growing children! Six ounces of Indian meal a day and water! no milk, no bread, no tea, for each member of an Irish home! This is the fact which Miss Cusack gives to the people of England as a sample of Irish

distress. The object of this excellent lady is to raise contributions to relieve the distress. I can only wish her God-speed. I thank her for the fact and for the beautiful spirit manifested in her letter."

The following is an extract from a letter written by Mr. J. Sullivan, Kenmare, to the editor of the Dublin *Freeman's Journal*:—

"I have ventured to send you an account of a scene I was a most unwilling witness of in this town to-day. About midday there were assembled some five hundred to six hundred men and women, of all ages, whose faces denoted want and misery. This mass of starving humanity rushed in evident frenzy to the several provision stores, to get the dole meted out to each individual by the gentlemen who form the committee for distributing relief; and woebegone indeed was the expression of the face of him or her who was kept too long waiting for what seemed to be a long-expected meal.

"Now, I find on inquiry that the fund which purchases food for this starving population has been obtained solely by that most estimable lady, 'The Nun of Kenmare.' The landlords or agents, with one or two exceptions, have not done anything to aid her in her noble efforts. The poor, starving people have to depend almost entirely on the funds obtained by that lady for relief. She has disbursed within a very short period very little short of £2,000 to the poor of this district; and it might be truly said, if there was no 'Nun of Kenmare,' many a cold grave would be filled through starvation ere this. Such a benefactress is worth a legion of speechmakers; for while they are talking she is working. Work such as hers should

not be allowed to pass unrecorded ; and her noble donors will, no doubt, give her ample means of carrying out her heaven-born ideas of saving a wretched, starving people from disease and death."

The object of my fund was, first, to supplement, as far as possible, the relief, often wholly inadequate, given by the public funds ; second, to enable clergymen of all denominations, and sisters, to exercise a most necessary discretion in assisting their destitute people, and to enable them to give such help in cases of severe sickness or weakness as would not be allowed to be given from the public funds.*

It was important to have a fund to help the convents in the distressed districts ; besides which there was the additional advantage of bringing the children to school, by giving them food and clothing. Thousands of children were unable to attend school for want of food and clothing.

I could fill a volume if I gave extracts from the letters I received from priests and nuns in every part of Ireland. I will only add a few letters received by me within the space of a few weeks from Protestant clergymen, Catholic gentlemen, Protestant ladies, and Catholic priests, all unknown to each other, and living in districts hundreds of miles apart.

Mr. O'Connell, of Derrynane, to whom I sent large help both in cash, food, and seed potatoes, wrote :—

* Nothing was allowed to be given except "Indian meal" : not even to the sick, the dying, or little children. The horrible suggestion was made by London newspapers that even this was to be made as distasteful as possible. The reader should know also that this meal had often to be eaten uncooked ; there had been a failure of fuel (turf) as well as of the potato.

“MY DEAR SISTER FRANCIS CLARE,—You have done a wonderful work in and about Kenmare, in relieving the poor, and in other parts of this diocese. For your munificent gift of £100 for seed potatoes to this district I and my poor neighbours can never be sufficiently grateful. As for Kenmare itself, from all I know and hear, I believe you, and you only, have prevented a famine there. I can only hope and pray that you may be enabled to carry on your good work to the end, and to support the poor for the next few months, the most trying time of all. That you will have your reward hereafter I am sure ; the prayers of God’s poor cannot fail to be heard for you.”

In a third letter he says :—

“I wish you could give us some more help for food soon. We have seven hundred families to provide for. There are two other districts in Iveragh which sorely want aid. Glenbeigh, where the distress is terrible, no relief works of any kind, and no one save the priest to do anything. Father Magin will, I know, be grateful if you can help him.

“The other district is the two parishes of Prior and Killmalage, both very poor, and very little being done in the way of drainage, etc. If you can send help for them, you may rely on its being properly expended and accounted for. I shall, of course, keep an account of the distribution of your potatoes. I can do it without any expense.”

I sent over £200 to this district in one month, and yet another urgent appeal came.

The Rev. C. O’Sullivan, P.P., The Mines, writes :—

“A thousand thanks for your magnificent donation

of £100, and a thousand blessings. There are fresh applicants every day."

The Protestant rector of Achill sent me a vote of thanks for the relief I sent to him and the Catholic priest. I must say that I had no little consolation in this matter. Again and again I received warm-hearted thanks from Protestant clergymen for the help that I had sent to the Catholic priest, as well as for the help I had been able to give them; and not the least warm thanks were given by the Protestant rector of Kenmare and of the two neighbouring parishes.

The Protestant clergyman of Achill wrote me :—

"The committee wish to convey to the good Nun of Kenmare their heartfelt thanks for her generous and large-hearted donation. They have a strong reason to enlist the charitable sympathy, as well as the influence and powerful voice of Sister M. Francis Clare for Achill, and they wish to make known to her the dire and terrible distress prevailing at present in this immense parish.

(Signed) "*Protestant rector*, J. B. GREER, Clk.
"*Catholic priest*, R. BIGINS, C.C."

A Protestant lady wrote to me :—

"I cannot find words to thank you from myself and on behalf of the many poor creatures whose hearts your generous gift will comfort and make glad. But I would ask you kindly to allow me to expend one-half of the amount of cheque [£100] in clothing. You can form no idea of how miserably naked many poor creatures are. I saw some girls doing some spring labour in my husband's fields a few days ago with nothing on them but a threadbare flannel petticoat

and the tattered shreds of an old shawl tied across their shoulders. Don't I wish we had Father N—— here for a few weeks, left to his own resources, and he would feel as well as see what Irish distress means.”*

The Protestant rector of Inchiguila wrote :—

“We” (the parish priest and himself, who are working most happily and unitedly) “are much obliged for the discretionary powers you have given us in dealing with your very large donation. Oh that we had even a few such ! we would then be enabled to bring gladness to many a home, now wretched homes, and joy and hope to many a sad heart.”

The Rev. Mother, Convent, B—— :—

“Your £50 was indeed a welcome gift to a convent in such a poverty-stricken district. There are hundreds of human beings crying for relief, and we have no means to help them.”

The Rev. Mother, C1—— :—

“May God bless you for your charity, so pure, universal, and disinterested. The number in terrible need of clothing and food would puzzle one,—all asking for work, and no work for them. Your £20 will do great good.”

Mother A——, Convent, B—— :—

“We have got no help, except £2, since you sent the last £50, and we have had fever, many cares of which we are attending, as they cannot be moved to hospital. We got spillars [fishing lines] out of the last

* Father N—— was an English priest who actually tried to prevent help from being sent to Ireland.

money you sent, so this will be a permanent relief, and seed potatoes, which Father —— is distributing.”

Sister M. P——, Convent'of St. —— :—

“Your £50 will indeed relieve hundreds who are truly in a pitiable condition.”

It is useless to occupy space with further details. I have taken these extracts without selection from a pile of similar letters.

The Rev. J. O'Sullivan, Port Magee :—

“There are thousands here on the verge of ruin. In one house, yesterday, I saw seven children crying with hunger.”

I sent £50 at once, though we had not half that sum left ; but, God be praised ! more than that came next morning, and was sent to other places and other priests, equally destitute.

Canon Bresnan, P.P., Cahirciveen, writes :—

“There are upwards of eight hundred destitute families here. How we are to struggle through the next five or six months I know not. As for clothing, £800 would not supply the barely necessary want, whilst some five hundred children are unfit to appear in school through this want. Dear sisters, do all you can to help me in this great work of need and charity. Praying God to send you more and more,

“I am, yours most truly,

“J. (CANON) BRESNAN.”

In November 1881 I received a threatening letter from London, which caused a great deal of feeling in

Ireland, and all the more so because some of the National Party were accused of having sent letters to obnoxious landlords. I took the matter for what it was probably worth, a mere bravado. If I had been assassinated, to have died for the cause of charity would have been a happy end to my troubled life. The matter was communicated to Mr. Forster, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, and I received the following letter in consequence :—

“CHIEF SECRETARY’S LODGE, PHOENIX PARK,
DUBLIN, *November 15th*, 1881.

“MADAM,—Mr. Forster desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th inst., and is sorry to hear you have received so insulting and atrocious a letter.

“Mr. Forster can only add that atrocious and insulting letters appear to be often written in Ireland, and the nature of the offence is one which makes it very difficult for the law to deal with.

“I am, madam, your obedient servant,

“HORACE WEST, *Sec.*

“TO SISTER M. FRANCIS CLARE.”

A public meeting was held in Kenmare, to denounce the anonymous writer of this letter, on December 10th, and I give a few extracts from the report as published in the *Kerry Sentinel*. As is usual in Ireland, the meeting was held on a Sunday. I may perhaps say that I have never received even the least expression of sympathy or interest from the Kenmare people since I left the place, which shows how little their expressions of gratitude and excitement on this occasion were worth.

THREATENING THE NUN OF KENMARE—GREAT
INDIGNATION MEETING AT KENMARE.(From the *Kerry Sentinel*.)KENMARE, *Sunday evening*.

The answer which South Kerry has this day given to the insult offered to the gifted nun who has made Kenmare famous the world over was both dignified and defiant. The town was filled long before twelve o'clock Mass. Large crowds came in from the different parishes surrounding Kenmare, headed by their priests. The Killarney brass band brought from Kilgarvan direction the largest contingent. They were met outside the town by a splendid body of Kenmare men, marshalled by stewards wearing green rosettes. They carried a splendid banner, with the device "Kenmare resents the insult offered to Sister Mary Francis. Behold her bodyguard." There were between six thousand and eight thousand persons present at the meeting. The meeting was held in the inclosure attached to the magnificent church, where a platform was erected.

On the motion of the Rev. M. Sheehan, P.P., seconded by Rev. J. Molyneux, the chair was taken by Ven. Archdeacon O'Sullivan,† P.P., V.G.

The venerable chairman, who was received with loud cheers, then addressed the meeting. He said,—
"I thank you, my friends, for the honour conferred on me in asking me to preside at this great meeting. I beg to assure you it is with feelings of the deepest pain I refer to the occasion which has called you all

* An equally full report of this meeting was published in the Cork and Dublin papers.

† The Archdeacon O'Sullivan who presided at the meeting was the second of the name, not Father John, who was then deceased.

together to-day. I need not anticipate the expression of your detestation of the dastardly conduct of that vile specimen of humanity who dared by his threatening letters to insult the gifted and noble-hearted lady who has shed a lustre, not only on the holy community of which she is such an ornament, but on the country at large. She has made the name of this little town known wherever the English language is spoken, and where literary labours of the highest excellence are appreciated. O'Connell never conferred on his native Kerry more honour or more glory than has the Nun of Kenmare on this hitherto unknown and remote locality. To enumerate to you the numberless productions of her pen which have graced the various walks of literature would be beside the purpose and object of this great meeting. The thousands of pounds she collected and distributed amongst the starving inhabitants, not only of Glenerough and Dunkerron, but of every parish in and out of Kerry from which the cry of distress reached her ears, prove to you, if proof were necessary, that the spirit of her holy founder, St. Francis of Assisi, pervades her soul, and that she is anxious to realise in her own conduct the great love that he manifested for the poor of Christ.

"In the annals of human depravity nothing more detestable or base could be found, and I need not ask you, my friends, what you think of such conduct and how it ought to be dealt with, when in a nation of gallant men, of men of honour and of cavaliers, ten thousand swords would have leaped from their scabbards to avenge the insult offered to this illustrious lady."

The Rev. M. Nelligan, who acted as secretary to

the meeting, read the following letters of apology which he had received:—

“ADRIGOLE, *December 3rd*, 1880.

“DEAR AND REV. SIR,—I deeply regret that it will be quite impossible for me to be present at the great indignation meeting in Kenmare on Sunday. Need I assure the Dunkerron and Glenerough men, assembled in their thousands to sympathise with the noble-hearted Sister M. F. Clare for the insult offered her, that I am with them in spirit? The indefatigable and successful exertions of the gifted Nun of Kenmare, on behalf of her famine-stricken fellow-beings, has drawn on her devoted head the ire of some enemy of the Irish race. That she did not confine her labours and charities to Kenmare alone, where she did wonders to avert famine, is notorious. She has been the generous benefactress of many places, her charity being as unbounded as distress was deep and widespread. In this afflicted barony of Bere no parish was left unaided. When want and sickness raged from end to end of my own Clenlaurence, her fifty-pound cheques came regularly, and in time to save hundreds from the horrors of starvation. Knowing where and when to give, she fed the hungry; scores of ragged and naked children were clothed at her expense; for those who had not a potato to put in the ground, she sent seed to crop the land. For this poor district, and others like it, she has, alone and unaided, done more to relieve distress than the largest and best-disposed of the charitable committees. In return, she has what to her is dearer than the treasures of earth—the good wishes of the poor.

“JAMES NELIGAN, P.P.”

“EXTON PARK, OAKHAM, ENGLAND, *December 8th, 1880.*

“DEAR SISTER,—I have just seen the announcement in the papers that you have received some threatening letters, and feel impelled to write and say how deeply I feel the disgrace that any one who has laboured as you have done for the good of common humanity could have been made the object of such petty spite. . . . I only hope it may be so, and that in any case God may long preserve you to work for our poor, persecuted race, as you have hitherto done.

“Wishing you every blessing for the coming season,

“I remain, sincerely yours,

“HENRY BELLINGHAM, M.P.”

“FARRANFORE, *December 2nd, 1880.*

“MY DEAR FATHER NELIGAN,—I regret that the obligation of Sunday duty here will not allow me to join in your expressions of indignation at the conduct of those who have offered insult to the good Nun of Kenmare, otherwise I would gladly do so; and whatever shall be said at your meeting in defence and vindication of that brave, learned, and true-hearted woman, shall command my entire sympathy and approval. Her charitable and able pen has been more nobly employed in soliciting and distributing alms to thousands of God's poor than that of the English lordling in vindictively maligning the good Nun of Kenmare.

“I remain, yours very faithfully,

“P. O'CONNOR, P.P.”

“Rest assured that no one attended your meeting who more heartily condemns than I do those dastardly

attacks on that noble and benevolent woman, who has done so much for our suffering country, and I will add, in particular, for the people of this parish.

“Yours very sincerely,

“M. O’CONNOR, P.P.”

The Rev. J. Molyneux supported the resolution. He said they had all come there at great inconvenience, and many of them from long distances ; but he was sure that every man of them would come double the distance, and suffer ten times the inconvenience, in order to attend that meeting. That gifted lady, the Nun of Kenmare, had done more within the past year to save the lives of the people than all the landlords and agents in Kerry had ever done. If the Nun from her convent cell could see that magnificent meeting, she would see that they were a people worth labouring for, and worth fighting for. Last summer an American with whom he travelled said to him,—he was a Protestant and a gentleman of position in the United States,—“There is no living Irishman or Irishwoman better known or more respected in the United States than Sister Mary Francis Clare,” and he added the extraordinary statement, “She is better known and more respected than even the Pope himself.” They would all, he was sure, pray God might grant her strength and long life to work for the people of Kenmare and for Ireland. “Yes, fellow-countrymen, that star has arisen, and the people call it Mary Francis Clare, and, like the star of Bethlehem, which guided the Magi of the Eastern nations to Jerusalem, so did Sister Clare guide and direct the charity of a world towards the support and

regeneration of this unfortunate and famine-stricken land. From her lonely cell by the banks of the purling little Finnehe her voice rang over the Rocky Mountains of America ; it was heard by the waters of the Pacific, and along the shores of San Francisco, and many a generous purse flew open at that call, and many, many an exiled Irish heart blessed that angelic voice which they ever heard raised in behalf of the poor and holy Ireland.

“Famine was scared away by the charity of foreign nations accumulated in Kenmare by Sister Clare. God bless her—may her shadow never grow less ; and here to-day I proclaim from the platform that we want no hirelings to protect her. For did she require it, we’d form a rampart of our bodies around her, and our best hearts’ blood would, for her sake, stain again the fields of old Ireland.”

MR. T. HARRINGTON, Editor *Kerry Sentinel*.—
“There are millions of our fellow-countrymen, the world over, to whom the name of the good and gifted Nun of Kenmare is more than a household word, and who would give the greater part of their earthly possessions for the proud privilege of standing here ‘to avenge even a look that would threaten her with insult.’ Far as the fame of Sister Mary Francis has extended—and who will deny that it has reached every land where the scattered Clan na Gael have found a home?—equally widespread and equally universal will be the feeling of indignation which this outrage shall call forth, and the exiled son of Ireland, in his log hut by the Susquehanna, or his home beneath the Southern Cross, will fiercely re-echo the cry of indignation which arises to-day from you, men

of Glanerough and Dunkerron. Why has this gentle follower of St. Francis been assailed?

"Simply because in the fulness of her womanly compassion for the miseries of the people she has not only kept them from actual starvation, but has dared to point to the system in which these miseries have their origin. She has dared to give offence to landlordism by stating that there was distress in and around Kenmare last winter, and by appealing to the sympathy of the Christian world for the relief of the suffering victims.

"Her urgent, incessant, and touching appeals reached every clime, and were respected by every grade of society, and in a short time she had collected no less than £15,000 for the relief of the people. Many amongst you, who retain a vivid recollection of the appalling famine of '47, can best appreciate the result of this herculean effort.

"You who witnessed these things can say how much Kenmare is indebted to her, who, under Providence, was the means of preventing a recurrence of those dread scenes last winter. 'If I could go on a platform,' said a Kenmare lady to me during the past week, 'I could tell them what Sister Clare has done. I could tell them that last year would be as bad as '47 and '48 only for her, and I remember that time well.'"

The following reports of relief committees are taken from the *Freeman's Journal* (Dublin). They refer to the period preceding the indignation meeting when I was distributing relief so largely. At that time £15,000 at least must have passed through my hands, as stated at the public meeting.

A VOTE OF THANKS PASSED TO SISTER M. FRANCIS CLARE BY THREE RELIEF COMMITTEES OF THE PARISHES OF KENMARE, SNEEM, AND KILGARVAN.

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘FREEMAN’S JOURNAL.’

“SIR,—As secretary of the Kenmare Relief Committee, I am only required to furnish the press with a summary of their proceedings in your advertising columns; but, sir, I feel I would be wanting in my duty if I did not place on record the noble exertions of the Nun of Kenmare. Were it not for her we would have no committee, because they would have no funds to distribute, having only received, up to the present, £50 from the Mansion House Fund, and £28 from the Duchess of Marlborough’s. I intend giving your readers a very brief idea of what this one member of the Order of Poor Clares in this remote district has done. Landlords of Kerry, it will shame your apathy and indifference to the sufferings of the poor. Look carefully at our advertisement, and see what the exertions of one noble woman from the seclusion of her lonely cell on the banks of the Finnehe has done to cheer their miserable homes, and to fill the empty stomachs of our starving people. Am I not right, then, in stating that were it not for that Heaven-sent guardian of the poor, many a poor Glenerough man and woman would to-day have fixity of tenure in the lonely graveyard?

“I remain, dear sir, yours faithfully,

“MICHAEL CRONIN,

“*Hon. Sec. Kenmare Relief Committee.*”

Kenmare Relief Committee.

At a meeting of the Kenmare Relief Committee held on the 10th inst., the following resolutions were

adopted unanimously, the members of committee present being,—

Chairman — Archdeacon Higgins, P.P., V.G. ;
Treasurer—Daniel O'Brien Corkery, J.P. ; *Secretary*
—Daniel Mahony, P.L.G. ; *Assistant Secretary*—
Michael Cronin. Rev. Maurice Neligan, C.C. ; J. D.
Sullivan, P.L.G. ; G. M. Maybury, J.P. ; Charles John
Maybury.

Proposed by G. M. Maybury, J.P. ; seconded by
Charles John Maybury,—

“ That this committee return their heartfelt thanks to Sister M. F. Clare for the generous assistance which she has given in relieving the poor of this district, they having received through her £100 for meal, together with one hundred and fifty sacks of meal for distribution, seventy blankets, and also £380 for the purchase of seed potatoes. They also return their grateful thanks to the superioress and sisters of the convent for their exertions in clothing and feeding so many of the poor during the present severe distress.

(Signed) “ ARCHDEACON HIGGINS, P.P., V.G.”

Proposed by D. O'B. Corkery, J.P. ; seconded by
J. D. Sullivan, P.L.G.,—

“ That this committee implore of Sister M. F. Clare to continue her hitherto herculean exertions to procure food and seed potatoes for the poor of this district, as every effort will be needed to save the people from starvation, and prevent a repetition of the dreadful scenes of the famine year again occurring in our midst.

(Signed) “ ARCHDEACON HIGGINS, P.P., V.G.,
‘ *Chairman.*”

In addition to what has been given to the Relief Committee here, the Nun of Kenmare has expended the following sums from collections entrusted to her care : —

Clothing poor children in Kenmare, £100 ; clothing to the poor of the school of Kenmare, Templenoe, and Cahir, £150 ; bales of clothing supplied to the poor, £200 ; for meal and other food, £154 6s 6d. ; weekly assistance to poor families, £50 ; distributions during Christmas week to 125 poor families, £87 16s. ; employment given, £78.

Cash sent by the Nun of Kenmare to districts outside this parish, £464.

Kilgarvan (Co. Kerry) Relief Committee.

It was proposed by the Rev. W. B. Smith, Protestant Episcopal rector, and seconded by Mr. Joseph Aldworth, P.L.G. :—

“Resolved : That the committee return their most sincere and deeply grateful thanks to Sister M. F. Clare for her generous donation of £60 to alleviate the suffering of our famine-stricken people, who, in this remote and desolate part of Kerry, have few friends to aid or help them to struggle through this terrible season of distress and depression. Were it not for the gigantic efforts and incessant appeals made by Sister M. F. Clare to all parts of the world in behalf of our poor people, the majority of them would be to-day either in their narrow graves, or obliged to seek a shelter in the workhouse, the last refuge of the pauper. We, therefore, cannot say less here to-day than that this true lover of God’s poor ones has by her exertions saved this whole district

from famine, as she has nobly and generously responded to the cry for help made to her from various quarters, both by priests and people.

(Signed) "MICHAEL SHEEHAN, P.P.,
" *Chairman.*

"This resolution to be published in the daily and weekly papers.

"The distress in this parish is most severe, and there is no employment of any kind for the people. Donations are urgently requested, which may be sent to any of the committee, or to Sister Mary Francis Clare, Kenmare. Help to purchase seed is specially needed."

Sneemy (Co. Kerry) Relief Committee.

At a meeting of the Sneem Relief Committee, held in the court-house on the 12th inst., to consider the claims of about five hundred applicants for relief, on the motion of the Rev. M. A. Horgan, C.C., the following vote of thanks to sister M. F. Clare was proposed by the Rev. Mr. Tynan, Protestant Episcopal Rector, and seconded by Thomas H. Fuller, Esq. :—

"Resolved: That the special thanks of the members of this committee are due to the distinguished authoress, Sister Mary Francis Clare, Kenmare, for her generous donation of £20 towards the relief of our suffering people, and that the secretary be requested to convey to her our sense of gratitude, inclosing at the same time a copy of this resolution, and that it shall be published in the daily and weekly papers.

(Signed) "REV. T. DAVIS, P.P., *Chairman.*"

CHAPTER XII.

TROUBLES WITH TROUBLESOME SISTERS.

“Whither, oh whither we look for rest,
We find it alone in the heart of the blest.”

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.”—2 PETER ii. 19.

I MUST now return to my personal history and convent affairs. Yet all that has been recorded above had to do intimately with the inside life of the sisters. I often feel, while writing this narrative, that it must be difficult for those who know nothing of convent life to understand all the misery and wretchedness which arise from what are apparently mere trifles; yet trifles are often the cause of the most serious evils. A great ocean steamer may be delayed in her voyage, or prevented from reaching her port, by the breakage of a pin. I have been reading over again the narrative of Miss Goodman, written many years since, about Miss Sellon's sisterhood, and I was greatly struck by some of the remarks which she has made. One thing which she emphasises is the terrible suffering caused by the infliction of perpetual silence; above all, when others are allowed full liberty of speech, and the victim of priestly tyranny is the exception. I had probably as cruel an experience in this matter as any one has ever experienced. After Father John's death Father Higgins was made

parish priest of Kenmare. He was a man of some learning for a priest, but if the general public only knew just what the education is in Maynooth and other Catholic colleges, they would not be surprised that priests are so illiberal. These men, who are to guide the destinies of nations and the peace of families, are kept in criminal ignorance of all that could help them to fulfil their mission with enlightened views. They are never allowed to read a newspaper, or to discuss public affairs, and yet later they are to dictate to the public how, and for whom, they are to vote. They are never allowed to read works of advanced science, or indeed any books which are not as narrow as the theology which they are to teach. Quarterly reviews and the higher class of magazine literature are absolutely unknown to them. They are, in fact, kept in deliberate ignorance as a preparation for enlightening others.

Father Higgins was a specimen of the most arbitrary of his class whom I have ever met. Like poor Father John, he dearly "loved a lord"; but he had none of the simplicity or kindly feeling of his predecessor. He was a man who could have been capable of any brutality, without the least idea he was brutal. From early youth he had never associated even with his own family, and during the vacations allowed to the Maynooth student he never went home, remaining in the college for seven years without leaving it. It may well be imagined what an effect this had on a character already disposed to play the inquisitor when occasion offered.

He was, moreover, a "landlord priest," and would not allow for a moment that there was distress in Ireland, to the no small indignation of his own

curates. He fell out with one of them, and never spoke to him for two years, though they dined at the same table all that time. No one could find out what cause of offence poor Father Riordan had given, and I have doubts if Father Higgins knew himself. At first Father Higgins was very civil to me. I know but too well what changed him in my case. He was a special favourite of the then bishop, Dr. Moriarty, and was looking out somewhat too openly for the mitre. It was said that he had the interest of the Kenmare family, and certainly he had Dr. Moriarty's, who had petitioned Rome to have him named coadjutor. Dr. Moriarty died soon after Father Higgins was made parish priest of Kenmare, and Mrs. O'Hagan died not long after. Thus I was deprived of three who were old friends, and who would, with perhaps the exception of Mrs. O'Hagan, have defended me from much that befell me later.

I had experienced much kindness from the then vice-president of Maynooth College, the Rev. Dr. McCarthy. He had undertaken, at my request, to read all my publications, according to the rule of the Church, and of course his support, from his exalted position, protected me from much annoyance which I might have had otherwise. He was a man of a very different stamp from Father A——, who wanted to claim the authorship of my "Life of St. Francis." Dr. McCarthy recommended my books to the students, and even quoted from some of them in his own books, which was the highest compliment he could have paid me. He was made Bishop of Kerry after the death of Dr. Moriarty, and Father Higgins was—well, he did not like it, nor did it improve his amiability. He worked in his garden and ditches

with redoubled energy, and made himself, if possible, more unamiable than ever. As for me, I was made to bear the whole brunt of his disappointment. I say this without hesitation, for I have letters both from priests and laymen who were witnesses of his treatment of me. For nearly two years he never opened his lips to me. If I ventured to come to recreation—and he was seldom absent, though it was against the rules for him to be present—he took care to show me that I was to be boycotted, so that after a little I kept in my room altogether. Some of the sisters were only glad to see me the victim of this persecution, while those who loved me, as some of them did, dared not say a word to me for fear of offending him. I was treated with a cruelty for which there was not one particle of excuse, and this was done at a time when the state of my health, to say nothing of the work I had done for the poor, should have entitled me to some consideration.

Mrs. O'Hagan had a long illness. She was always delicate, and broke down entirely after Father John's death. As I have said before, I never could learn exactly what was the cause of her suffering, but I know that her own imprudence greatly aggravated it. Nothing would induce her at times to take ordinary care of her health or ordinary rest. She was at last sent to Dublin for advice. A sister was sent with her, and on this sister's return some story came out which almost maddened Mrs. O'Hagan. While Mrs. O'Hagan was in Dublin she went first to the Sisters of Mercy, and while there some scandal took place in which she was in some way compromised. The sister who was with her either sent for the bishop, or the Sisters of Mercy did so. However that may

be, I can never forget the savage cruelty with which the poor sister was treated on her return. She was literally hounded down by every one in the house, though not one of us knew what crime she had committed. I believe her sole crime was that she had spoken of whatever had happened to the bishop, which it was her duty to do. For months she was kept a prisoner in her cell, and Sister Teresa, who had attacked me so cruelly in Newry Convent for what I never even thought of doing, constituted herself chief executioner. How my heart bled for Sister A——, but I was powerless to help her. I asked in vain what she had done.

At last she obtained release from confinement, and in some degree from persecution, by signing a paper, in which she retracted whatever she had said about Mrs. O'Hagan to the bishop. I asked the bishop about the matter afterwards, and he assured me that he had no doubt whatever that what Sister A—— had said was true, but he would not tell me what it was ; he said it was better for me not to know. How all this shows what convent life would be if Rome had the temporal power which she so ardently craves ! This poor sister would have been sent to some prison, whence she could never have escaped, or been treated to the *Vade in pace* of the Inquisition. How terrible it is that such irresponsible power should be in the hands of any human being ! It mattered little whether the charges which she made were true or false, she had to suffer ; and though I am sure she knew them to be true, she had to swear in the most solemn manner that they were untrue.

I need scarcely say that all the labour which I had to endure, the sufferings inflicted on me, and the trials

of those around me, did not improve my health. I was for some years in an extremely delicate state, but nothing would be done for me. I would not even be allowed to go to a convent of the Sisters of Mercy, who begged I might be sent to them for change and medical treatment. They had helped the circulation of my books, and I was able to help them largely in the famine year—a return which they little expected.

I ought to have had proper surgical advice, but instead of this I was placed in the hands of an ignorant and utterly incompetent country doctor, who so mismanaged my case as to entail on me years of suffering. All this time I was supporting the convent, and other sisters were being sent, practically at my expense, for advice or change to Dublin. God, and He alone, knows, or will ever know, what I suffered. The cruelty of the sisters to one who had done so much for them, and whose sufferings were as great as mine, would, I believe, be scarcely credited, if I could tell all, but for obvious reasons I cannot do so. On more than one occasion I was deliberately disturbed, after I had gone through severe surgical treatment, and should have had at least a few hours' absolute quiet.

There was then an English sister in an important office in the convent, whose father had been a publican of the lowest class, and who, poor girl, was hardly accountable for her want of education and refinement. She seemed to actually revel in acts of cruelty towards me. On one occasion, when I had been very ill, and begged that just for that once I should not be disturbed for a few hours, she went to the room under the one I occupied, which was used as a laundry, and deliberately dragged all the heavy mangles, etc., from one side of the place to the

other. It was in vain that some of the sisters, more humane than herself, entreated her to desist at least for a few hours. I often wonder that my reason did not forsake me in all this misery. On another occasion she came to my room and declared that there was nothing the matter with me but imagination, and abused me in the most violent terms. I had at last to assert myself, and told her if she ever acted in this way again I would send for a Protestant gentleman in the neighbourhood, and ask for his protection. I wish now I had done this ; I might have saved myself many years of misery. But unfortunately sisters do not know who to trust, and there is a general impression amongst them, not altogether ill founded, that, while Protestants are very ready to condemn the evils of convent life, they are not so ready to help those who have tried to escape from them.

After the death of Mrs. O'Hagan, a highly coloured narrative of her life was written in my name. It, however, failed to please her family because the plain facts were stated as to her origin, which, though respectable, was not of the highest class. Father Higgins was the projector of this ; and as he was looking for the mitre again, it was a disappointment to him that his plan did not work as well as he expected. At this time I was quite broken down in health, and unable to do more than walk from my room to the end of the corridor. No sister ever came near me, except the one who brought me my meals. If I met any of the sisters as I was slowly and painfully making my way to another room for a little change, she would turn her head to the other side, or utter some rude remark. In the evenings, in the long summer twilight, the sisters used to sit out in the

garden together and work, and amuse themselves, but I was left all alone. Many a time I went to the window just over where they sat to listen to the voices, so as to assure myself that there were still some human beings in the world. How often I gazed with a broken heart at the setting sun, and prayed to die ! But death is not for the wretched, or my end would have come long since. If I could only tell, if I could only describe what I felt in those hours of lonely anguish, I think the hardest heart would feel for me. Even the recollection is almost more than I can bear. And all this time, while many outside were coming to the convent and asking for the Nun of Kenmare, and were being told I was too ill to see any one, they little knew how I was suffering, and why. I now made up my mind that I would leave Kenmare and return to Newry Convent, or some other convent. I knew well that any convent would be only too glad to receive me, and I believed that they would not all be as inhuman as the Kenmare sisters. There were several sisters in Kenmare who were truly good and truly amiable, but they were crushed down by the relentless tyranny of the bad. I knew they sympathised with me, but I knew also they dare not help me, or they would have shared my fate. And they, too, had to suffer, though for many reasons not as I did. For the most part they had excellent health, and were thus enabled to go about, and could not be placed in an isolated position as I was.

I knew that Sister J——, who had been one of the original malcontents, was aspiring to the office of abbess ; she was the principal teacher in the schools, and even after I went to America I heard many a tale of her rudeness to the other sisters who taught

under her. I knew that she had laid herself out to annoy a very excellent sister, who was far her superior in every way, and was therefore a special mark for her shafts of bitterness and ill-nature. Her friends, who were of the lowest class, were so proud of her position in the schools, that they thought she could aspire to any honour; but the sisters knew her temper too well to advance her further.

At this time Mrs. O'Hagan was actually dying. A married sister of Sister J——'s managed to get to see me, to try if she could win my vote and interest for Sister J——'s appointment as abbess. I was almost too indignant to speak. She said, "Father Higgins says my sister must be abbess." I replied, using very plain language, that we knew her sister too well to allow any such arrangement, and that I thought she might have the decency to wait till Mrs. O'Hagan was in her grave. She assured me that it was all for the good of the sisters, that she knew it was impossible for me to take the office, as I should have done, on account of my health, and hinted that I should find it to my advantage to comply with her wishes. This woman, be it remembered, could scarcely read or write, and was as violent and coarse as Sister J——, who had at least the advantage of a national school education. Such were the miserable intrigues, the quarrels, the folly, of the life which is supposed by some Protestants, as well as by many Catholics, to be so sublime.

After Mrs. O'Hagan was dead, the sister of whom I have spoken before as having been so violent to me in Newry was elected abbess (Sister Teresa). I gave my vote for her, hoping that the grace of her office would have given her a little more charity for others.

But she was too weakminded to start a new career ; besides this, she was very much broken down by the conduct of her brother, a priest. I did not know, until after I had left the convent, that he had gone to ruin from the usual cause, the curse of drink. I often wondered why she spent so much time crying, and was saying perpetually that it would be better for some men never to be priests. At last I heard the whole miserable story. For years—in fact, it would seem from the very hour of his ordination—he had given himself up to drink. I had been told he was such a saint that I never suspected anything could be wrong in his case. I remembered later he acted very strangely the day I received the white veil in Newry Convent. It was made a good joke of after by the sisters, but unfortunately for myself I have always been of far too trusting a nature ; and unless I see wrong so plainly that I cannot overlook it, I do not see it at all. On one occasion I saw him lying full length on the sofa in the parlour in Kenmare Convent, with his head in the lap of a sister. As I knew I should only get into more trouble if I spoke of this, I held my peace ; but I thought he could not be all I was assured he was. I did not know then of his unhappy failing, nor did I even suspect it.

Some time after I left the Kenmare Convent he wrote me a piteous letter, and told me all, and asked my help ; but as I was not in a position to do anything for him, I left his communication unanswered. He was a young man of great promise, bound down to an unnatural life against which his whole soul revolted, and knowing no way to obtain release. Drunkard as he was, there was a refinement and gentleness about him which is rare in men of his class.

Matters came to a crisis in my own history at this time. I decided to leave Kenmare. Father Higgins had obtained the much-desired mitre, which he did not live long to enjoy. I believe the priests who voted for him repented at leisure.

The first act of his official career was to issue the most stringent prohibition against any curate attending a political meeting of any kind whatsoever; and what is an Irish priest if he cannot make a speech at a party gathering, even if he cannot use the national shillelah? I believe that Father Higgins was sincerely glad to get rid of me, but it was not so with the sisters. When they realised that I was actually leaving, and that there would be a consequent serious diminution in their funds, they were furious; but this did not lead to any change in their conduct towards me.

Father Higgins had been advanced to be Dean of Tralee, and Archdeacon O'Sullivan, a worthy successor of the old Father John, was parish priest of Kenmare. He was nominated for bishop as well as Dean Higgins, and great was the fear of the sisters lest he should gain the prize which the dean had so long coveted. They made no secret of their wishes. I had tried to conceal my preferences in every way possible when Father Higgins had aspired to the mitre after the death of Dr. Moriarty, but he thought that I was opposed to his advancement, and wished to have Dr. McCarthy. The following extract from a letter of a gentleman who had personal evidence of this will explain itself. It must be remembered that these events occurred several years previous to the time of which I am now writing. I only allude to them as being so closely connected with the circum-

stances which I now relate. In fact, they were the cause which led to these events.

At that time I was in delicate health, but was able to go to the parlour sometimes to meet visitors. Father Higgins was then our parish priest. Dr. Moriarty was just dead, and every one was asking who should succeed him. A priest who was visiting friends in the neighbourhood was present at the breakfast given to the priests in the convent parlour. I never said one word, because I knew well how sore Father Higgins was on the subject; but this priest wrote to a mutual friend in New York: "I saw Higgins eyeing at [*sic*] the Nun of Kenmare in a way that did not promise well for her future happiness, for he thought that she preferred Dr. McCarthy to him for bishop; and certainly she could not be blamed for so doing, as he had been such a devoted friend of hers for many years." As for the "eyeing," I never noticed it, and I know that I never said a word. I should have considered it not the part of a lady to have expressed an opinion before a person who was so interested. But from later experience I am certain that the sisters were the principal cause of the trouble between Father Higgins and myself. I found them out later in such unscrupulous falsehoods, that I am convinced they told him, with many exaggerations, that I did not wish him to be bishop, and perhaps even forged papers, as they did later on another subject, to convince him. They certainly had no ground for any such proceeding, for I was most cautious never to express an opinion before them, or indeed before any one, on this vexed question.

It was generally supposed that Bishop McCarthy was placed in the diocese to get him honourably out

of Maynooth. There was a vacancy in the presidential chair of Maynooth College, and by a sort of prescriptive right he should have been made president. For many reasons this was not considered desirable to the governing powers. He had, however, to be provided for, and this was the result.

When it was announced, several years later, that Father (then Dean) Higgins was bishop after the premature death of Dr. McCarthy, the sisters could not conceal their triumph. And the way in which they manifested it showed what manner of spirit they were of. Archdeacon O'Sullivan was then parish priest, and an excellent and devoted man. He did all he could for the sisters, but they were always opposing him, because he was not a favourite with Dean Higgins. We had a magnificent organ in Kenmare Church, the gift of the first Father John. There was no one who understood music except myself when we went to Kenmare. The Sister C——, of whom I have spoken as having been so cruel to me in illness, had a very powerful voice, which filled the large church easily ; but it had not been cultivated, nor had she the least natural culture. The whole burden of training a choir fell on me when we went to Kenmare, until some sisters came with a little knowledge of music, whom I trained. The organ at that time was placed at the end of the very large church, and we found it a serious inconvenience having to go to it in all kinds of weather, but we had to do it. After some years, when I had money, I got the organ moved to another part of the church, so that the sisters could get to it without exposure. At that time I was unable to play the organ, so that I reaped no benefit to myself from the change,

nor, I can truly say, did I ever think of myself in such matters. What I have now to narrate will show how utterly ungrateful the sisters were for anything which I did for their convenience.

On the Sunday when it was rumoured that Father Higgins was made bishop, though there was no official announcement, the sisters had the *Te Deum* sung after the public mass. They knew well that I intended to leave if he was appointed, and they knew well that Archdeacon O'Sullivan, who actually said the mass, had at least as good a chance of the mitre as Dean Higgins. But what matter? The singing of the *Te Deum* to celebrate the supposed nomination of Dean Higgins before the very face of the, if we may say so defeated candidate never seemed to them an unchristian act. As for myself, they were only too glad to have an opportunity to use the very instrument and conveniences which I had given them to hurt and pain me. It was a proof to me, if I had needed proof, that Kenmare was no longer the place for me. But who was to know all this? I believe there are few indeed who would have borne with all that I bore with for so long a time, but no one knew what I was suffering. The next day I went for a few moments to the recreation room. I had hardly entered when I was attacked in the rudest manner by Sister C——. I had quite made up my mind what I would do the next time any of the sisters were openly rude to me. I replied, "Sister C——, I have borne a great deal from you and others in this house; I will not bear it any longer. If you address me in this violent manner I will leave the room; but remember, if I leave the room I will never enter it again, and I will leave the convent as soon as I possibly can." I

spoke to her calmly, because I spoke deliberately. But it was of no avail. I believe even some of the sisters were shocked at the torrent of coarse and violent abuse which she poured out on me. But I fled, and left her speaking. I kept my word. I never entered the room again, and I left the convent immediately afterwards.

CHAPTER XIII

LEAVING KENMARE.

“What have I left?
Of friend, aim, love, bereft;
Stripped bare of everything I counted dear.”
ADELINE SERGEANT.

“In Him shall the Gentiles trust.”—ROM. xv. 12.

I HAVE often heard it said, “If you were unhappy, why did you not leave the convent?” Now, I have found two classes of people who have totally opposite views of convent life, and both are equally wrong in the impressions which they have formed. One class supposes that a convent is a prison, and that sisters cannot get out, no matter how unhappy they may be; the other supposes that a sister has nothing to do but leave a convent if she does not like it. The true state of the case is, that at present, in this country, if a sister wishes to leave a convent she can do so. But what is to become of her? Would to God that there were more true and genuine sympathy for sisters! Whenever there is, there will be more escaped nuns, but they will not be called by that name. It should be understood that while in America, and in some Irish convents, in remote districts like Kenmare, the majority of the sisters are of the lowest class, in England, with the exception

of the lay sisters, they are often ladies by birth and education. Remember that they have the feelings and instincts of ladies, and would shrink from many things which would not be heeded for a moment by persons of a different social position. Remember how much a woman will bear before she speaks, how much she will suffer in silence, and then you can understand one reason why so few nuns leave their convents. But there is another, and, if possible, a more pressing, reason : if a sister wishes to leave a convent, what is to become of her ? Many a time I asked myself this question ; and when later I shall tell the story of my trials after I left the convent, it will be seen that my fears fell far short of the terrible reality.

If the relatives of the sister are Romanists, they will not receive her ; they consider that she has disgraced herself. No love will stand the test of the fear which Rome has implanted in the heart of the tenderest parents. I have often known of cases where parents have refused to receive back their daughters, though they had only taken the white veil. The girl has made her choice, they say ; she has been well provided for ; what does she want more ? For all that they can see sisters are as happy as other people ; why cannot she be content ? If the sister has been many years in the convent the case is far worse for her. She has been deliberately cut off from intercourse with her friends ; they have begun to forget her ; her sisters and brothers have married, and have new interests, in which she, having been so long separated from them, has no share. They have new relatives ; and even if the old sister love remains, it is not the same as it was formerly. They may not love the sister in the convent less, but the love is of

a different kind. I have often heard sisters say that they felt deeply that their relatives never came to see them unless they had some trouble for which they wanted to get prayers or sympathy. I know this to be true, because I was for so many years superior ; I knew what was said and felt. Many a time, too, in Kenmare, I have myself felt keenly that even the sisters could manage to come to my room during the time in which I was so long unable to leave it whenever they wanted to have something done for a relative or for themselves, though they never came o give me a moment's pleasure.

Then there is the religious terror which has been impressed on the Catholic from childhood, and which is the great factor in keeping the Catholic Church together. Parents are terrified by the priest lest they should lose their own souls if they extend a helping hand to a daughter who wishes to leave a convent, and the poor sister—God help her !—thinks it is better to suffer here than hereafter, as she is told she surely will if she breaks her vows.

It would be quite impossible for any one who has not been a Romanist to realise all this as it is.

But it will be said, Why does she not go to a Protestant clergyman? Now, a moment's consideration will show that this is the very last thing she is likely to do. She has been taught that Protestants are all damned already ; she has been obliged to teach this doctrine to the children in the schools ; and is it likely she can all in a moment change her opinion ? I would give a great deal if I could enable Protestants to realise the true state of things, because, if they did so, there would be some hope of a remedy. They look on the change of belief which a person has to

make when they leave the Church of Rome as if it were just the same as going from one Christian denomination to another, whereas it is far harder for a Romanist to leave Rome than it is for a Chinese to leave his idol worship. Hence, if anything is to be done with Romanists, and above all with sisters, the first thing to do is to have patience; and it is my experience that this is just the very last thing which is ever thought of in such circumstances.

The chains have been long winding round the poor sister's heart and intellect; for the love of God be tender and patient with her, and let God do His work in His own time and way, while you do yours in loving, patient waiting. All Catholics are mistrustful of Protestants because they have been taught to be so; but sisters are, above all, distrustful because they are carefully told all the evil possible about them. They are warned, as I was, that Protestants will talk a great deal against Rome, but when it comes to the point of doing anything for any one who has the courage to leave Rome they are very slow indeed. Is it wonderful if sisters hesitate to cast themselves on the mercy of those whom they know not, and of whom they have never heard anything but evil? I think not. Then there are the old ties and associations to be broken. We know how prisoners who have been for many years in gaol have asked to be taken back when released and given their freedom. Even as I write I see that a Roman Catholic priest, who has come before the public to denounce a nun who has just escaped from a French convent, has declared that sisters "always want to return." I know that there is a little truth in this assertion, but I know also that Christian people are very much

to blame for this state of feeling, and for their conduct toward those who have left the Church of Rome. Again, a sister who has been many years in a convent has become so accustomed to that kind of life, that she feels quite strange in her new surroundings.

Remember that she has been absolutely secluded from the "world," and that she has lived in a little contracted world of her own; that everything is strange and untried; that she is unnaturally suspicious and sensitive; that she has been so cruelly treated for years that, even if her disposition is angelic, she cannot at once change. I do not know that a Christian could have a more glorious work to do than to help, to comfort, and reassure one so placed. But it is a work for God, and it is not a work for show. Let it be remembered also that every sister who is so helped, and comforted, and encouraged will be the means of helping and comforting others. Though it is supposed that all knowledge of what goes on outside is kept from the sisters, yet I have often been amazed how much gets to be known. Sisters are naturally intensely interested in the fate of any one who leaves a convent. They ask at every opportunity what has become of them, how have their new friends received them. Servants, visitors, and sometimes even a priest will report what is going on, and, believe me, there are many who listen eagerly for a word. Terrible indeed is the fear that comes over a sister when the first thought forces itself on her that all is not as it should be in the life of a nun. It should be noted also that it is not because a sister is converted that she thinks of leaving her convent; as yet she only sees men as trees walking. Everything is distorted; she

has no means whatever of judging accurately of her surroundings. She sees that all is not what she once supposed it to be, but she does not yet know why. She wants Christ, but she practically has not as yet heard that there is a Christ; how then can she understand her need of Him? You cannot open her eyes at once, but you can help her to do so gradually.

I see so much earnest desire to help Catholics to the light in this blessed Christian England, that I am bold to write more freely than I should do otherwise. It seemed to me sometimes as if I was to be a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men; as if I should be reviled and buffeted, should hunger and thirst, and be despised, and, hardest of all, have no certain dwelling-place, for the sake of others. If I had come direct to England after I left the Church of Rome I should have been saved much suffering, because English hands would have been stretched out to help me, and English hearts would have been opened to comfort me. But it was perhaps needful that I should suffer loneliness and desolation in a country where fear of Rome has paralysed every effort for the release of those who are crying out for freedom. England has sent her missionaries even to Rome to convert the Italian; England must yet send her missionaries to America to convert the Irish Catholic emigrant.

If I had desired it I could have left Kenmare and gone to another convent; but the same feeling which makes a sister so unwilling to move or make any change kept me from action, and no doubt God had His own designs. In leaving Kenmare, when at last I had made up my mind to do so, I had another motive besides a desire to free myself from the cruelties

which were daily inflicted on me by the sisters. Even before the famine of '79 had drawn my attention perforce to the state of unhappy Ireland, I had thought long and seriously as to the cause of its perpetual misery. It was clear to me that there must be some remedy, and I saw, in part, what could be done. But I had calculated without my host. The fact was patent that the people were half their time in a state of starvation, and the fact was patent that there were landlords who seemed to live only to oppress the poor. Later, to my amazement, I learned what I have said elsewhere, that the Catholic landlords were the worst landlords. This was a revelation to me, and set me thinking.

Just at the time when it was most needed we lost a very large sum of money which had been left by the first Father John for the poor children. It was invested in the estate of the late Lord Fermoy. I do not believe a penny of it was ever recovered. At that time the word "impossible" was not in my dictionary. What an immense amount of suffering I might have saved myself if I had only concerned myself a little less for others! I at once set to work to replace the fund, and nearly succeeded in doing so before I left Kenmare.

There was a sister there who belonged to the class of petty landlords, or middlemen, who have been the ruin of Ireland. Her brother was a J.P., and she looked up to herself accordingly. She was not one of my tormentors, for she had a good heart, and some little refinement and education, and suffered herself physically with great patience. One day I said to her that I was so grieved about the poor children who were deprived of their food and clothing by

the loss of this money. "Oh," she replied, "I don't mind about them so much, they are used to it ; but I do feel for poor Lady F——, who has lost so much of her jointure." I simply stared at her in utter amazement, but I said nothing,—I had learned the wisdom of silence by painful experience,—but I thought a great deal. This, then, was the spirit of the Irish Catholic. It was no matter about the poor, but a rich woman who could well bear a little loss was to be commiserated.

I began to understand the Irish question a little. I soon understood it a good deal more.

The sisters had started a lace industry soon after we went to Kenmare, but anything more useless could scarcely have been undertaken. But it made a show, and it brought a good deal of money to the convent, but not to the poor. While visitors were led to believe that all this beautiful work was done by the poor children, the truth was that the greater part of it was done by the sisters, and the money obtained for it went into the convent funds. I always hated frauds, pious or otherwise, and I had a habit of saying so. It would have been better if I had kept silent. I could not mend matters, and I made it very unpleasant for myself. Some of the girls certainly were taught to do the lace, and did it well, and were paid for it ; but of what use ? They were unfit for any other occupation, and certainly they could not earn a living by it except through the sisters. What was to become of them if they emigrated, or from any cause were unable to continue this work ? So I thought of another plan ; but the very fact that I suggested anything was a sufficient reason for its being opposed.

My ideas were practical. We had very extensive grounds in Kenmare, and many local advantages. The convent was very large, and as I had been the means of enlarging it, I thought that at least my voice might have some weight in the consideration of the best use to which it could be put. I proposed an industrial school on an entirely new plan, which would have helped those who were about to emigrate, and would also have helped girls who went to England, as many did.

As it may even now be useful to have this plan placed on record, I give the details as they were published at the time.

In 1881 I wrote a paper, by request, for the Social Science Congress, which met in Dublin. This paper was read for me by Dr. Maypothor, President of the Royal College of Surgeons. In this paper I advocated the establishment of special institutions in Ireland to prepare girls for emigration. I believe the importance of such an undertaking could not be overestimated ; and a long experience in America has convinced me of this more fully. But it was the old story. The priests did not want to have the girls educated in thrift and industry ; they were opposed to my work, and found an ingenious method of injuring it, and the same plan was tried in New York, showing how truly the Irish are too often their own worst enemies. It was suggested that the girls did not want any training, that they had got on very well without it for years, and it was made to appear as if I were lowering the character of the Irish people by even suggesting that they needed any teaching. This style of talking was not without its effect on those who needed teaching most.

I give here a brief extract from my address :—

“To give our people a general knowledge of the agricultural and commercial conditions of lands where emigrants are most needed, and will be most welcome, would be a most important element in their course of study, so that we may no longer find that kind of haphazard emigration which is indicated when you ask a boy or girl why they are leaving their native land, and get the reply, ‘To better myself,’ when the speaker has not the least idea of how the ‘bettering’ is to be accomplished. I do not touch here on the all-important point of protection for girls going to a distant land. During the last twenty-eight years 2,637,000 of our people have left Ireland for other shores. How many of these men and women, boys and girls, have sunk down by the wayside in despair, or sunk down into the slums of great cities, living a miserable existence, can only be known by those who have taken a practical interest in emigrants, or had exceptional means of ascertaining their state in their new homes. How much of this evil might have been averted if these emigrants had had the benefit of advice and a guiding hand—if they had gone with a special object to a special place, instead of going in a ‘happy-go-lucky’ fashion, too often a most unlucky one.”

Is it not strange Catholics do not see that it is just in the very places where their Church has the most power that the greatest evils exist? It is neither the devil nor the Protestant who drives the poor Catholic into infidelity; it is the teaching of his Church.

The following will show how necessary a work of this kind was for English Roman Catholics. I give this letter *verbatim* :—

"ST. HELEN'S, LANCASHIRE,
" *September 3rd, 1884.*

"SISTER MARY FRANCIS CLARE :

"DEAR MADAM,—Allow me, with all due deference and respect, to congratulate you upon your arrival here in England. You are the very lady we want to help us in this land of heresy. Protestantism and Infidelity this last three hundred years have been pretty successful in driving our Catholic people to the lowest depths of misery and degradation, by depriving us of our useful guides for the laity : the monks and the nuns.

"I see your new Order in the Church proposes to teach young women household duties—the very thing they want. My experience of five years' visiting among our people, by order of the Jesuit Fathers of St. Helen's, convinces me you are taking the bull by the horns, so to speak, in endeavouring to teach our Catholic young women their household duties. Many a house I have visited, and I have seen dinners prepared for men who have to work before red-hot furnaces, and breathing impure air from morning until night, and these said dinners were only fit to be given to the brute creation. The result of this bad cooking is, the men want strength to follow their employment, the food they get is insufficient, and they have recourse to drink ; and on pay-days, in place of going home, or into a refreshment room to have some dinner or a cup of coffee, it is into the public-house they go, and, having drink upon an empty stomach, they are drunk and incapable, directly fall into the hands of the police, and get fined very often and very heavily.

"Dear sister, I am giving you a true statement of what is constantly occurring among a Catholic popu-

lation of 20,000 people. Well, it is quite time some charitably disposed individual or individuals, under the patronage of the holy Church, should come to help and to guide our poor Catholic young women ; for by a young man getting an ignorant wife, he becomes a careless Catholic, and unless he is very careful he will fall into the snares of infidelity ; for it is my firm conviction, the devil is more busy, ten thousand times, with Catholics than he is with Protestants, *alias* Infidels.

“ I am thankful to Almighty God and His Blessed Mother you have come into England to found a really useful class of women. I sincerely hope you may have branch houses in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin by the end of ten years, for these are some of the principal cities of the kingdom which are crying out for help.”

As the signature to this letter might bring the writer into trouble I do not append it. I may say, however, it is only one of many letters which I have received on the same subject. The *people* have always wished for this work. It has been opposed and discouraged only by bishops and priests.

The following letter, which was published in the *Times* of June 16th, 1884, will explain fully the work I proposed to do, the accomplishment of which was determinately opposed and finally prevented by the priests and sisters :—

THE DOMESTIC TRAINING OF GIRLS.

“ *To the Editor of the ‘ Times.’*”

“ SIR,—As your Roman correspondent has telegraphed the object for which I obtained the great

privilege of a private audience with the Pope, I will ask you the favour of allowing me to say a few words about the work for which I have obtained the special approbation of the Holy See. My object is simple : it is to found a religious Order devoted to the domestic training of girls. We propose not merely to train girls for domestic service, but for what I consider of equally great, if not of greater importance—to train girls for domestic life.

“The peace of the family and the prosperity of the family depend upon domestic life. Families are the units of nations. If you have peace and prosperity in the family, you have it in the nation. The subject is as vast as it is important, but I refrain from entering on it. A great deal of the political disturbance of the present day arises from the social condition of the so-called lower classes. I have no Utopian scheme for making millionaires of poor men. I have a long-formed, very ardent desire to train the children of the poor for domestic life in a practical way, and I believe if this plan were carried out carefully and extensively that it would do very much to make the houses of the poor more comfortable, and, as a necessary consequence, to make the masses of the population more contented. A great deal of the education of the present day is, I believe, an honest and generous effort in the wrong direction. There are many men of large minds and great hearts who feel deeply for the social condition of the poor and middle classes. Naturally, they suppose that the higher the education the greater the social comfort. I respect the benevolent intentions of these gentlemen none the less because I know that their theory will not work. If you teach a girl all the known sciences, it will not necessarily teach her

either to earn her living or to make her home happy. Further, as the sphere of woman's work advances in the middle classes, and as she enters more and more into duties and offices hitherto held by men, the necessity becomes greater that those who do the domestic work of the household should be specially and carefully trained for that special purpose.

"Theoretically, training is useless. I propose to train girls practically for domestic life, so that any girls so trained will be, I hope, equally fit for domestic service and for married life. I believe the great oversight in all training for girls has been that people do not realise the fact, that the girls of to-day will be the wives and mothers of to-morrow, and the girl of to-day is taught carefully everything except what will make her fit to be a good wife and a good mother.

"The difference between the training which I would propose and that of other institutions, where girls or young women are prepared for service, is this—girls will be trained, as far as possible, to act precisely as they would do in a private family, instead of being trained as they are in public institutions. The inmates of each training-house will be divided into groups or families of ten or twelve. Each group will have their own table, their own bedrooms, and separate places for cooking in the general kitchen. The object of thus dividing the girls is obvious. Each will learn the domestic duty for which she is most suited; one will act, for example, as cook for her group, and will thus learn how to cook, keep accounts, and provide for a small family. Another will have charge of the linen and needlework for her group; another will have charge of the washing. Thus each girl would be carefully trained for a certain work or for several

kinds of domestic work ; and as all this will be carried out under an experienced superintendent, who will have charge of the group or family, the girls' training will prepare them practically for the occupations they are likely to have in their future life, whether in the service of others or in their own homes. Every girl in each group would be taught in turn to purchase the food or clothing necessary for the little family group to which she belongs. Thus a great object will be attained. It is well known that girls who have been trained in large institutions are often useless when they return to their own humble homes, or when they are engaged as servants in private families. The cause of this is obvious—everything has been provided for them, everything has been arranged for them, they have had no personal responsibility, and when they are brought face to face with this responsibility they do not know how to act. Girls who are trained in large institutions find everything ready to their hands, and are, as a rule, all employed in one kind of labour ; they are rarely occupied or taught the various minor details of household duty, which are so necessary to be practised by a good servant, and which are equally important for the peace and comfort of families where they are employed. Hence the necessity of having what may be called family training. Those girls who are to be trained for nurses will have special opportunities for learning their duties by being given the sole charge of two or three very young children, and it is also proposed, when such works may be desirable and in places where they may be a necessity, to have houses for friendless girls who are engaged in factories and other public works, and who are often exposed to most

terrible danger. These houses may be made at least partly, if not altogether, self-supporting, as girls being in regular employment should pay a certain small fixed sum for their board and lodgings. These houses may be under the charge of a trustworthy matron, engaged by the sisters, and shall be constantly and closely superintended by them. Every effort shall be made to make these houses cheerful and attractive to the girls. Girls preparing to emigrate will also be received for particular training. This is another duty of great importance, as so many girls are placed in circumstances of serious temptation (to which too often many are found to yield) when they arrive in foreign countries without any previous training or preparation for the duties they may be required to undertake."

I know well that it was very difficult for Protestants and even for Romanists, to understand the miserable condition of convent life. I shall never forget the exclamation of amazement which was uttered by a gentleman in Kenmare when I told him that I was leaving the convent and the cause. Though he had been closely connected with all our affairs, and I had done a great deal for him and his family in '79, he had not even the least idea of the way in which I was treated by the sisters. No one knew but the priests, and they were bound to secrecy. As for myself, I never opened my lips to any one on the subject. It would have been of no benefit whatsoever, and I knew well would only make my case worse.

In 1880 the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cloyne sent a priest to me to see what could be done about founding a home for emigrant girls in Queenstown,

where they could be protected while they were waiting for the ocean steamers, or, if they liked, where they could remain for a short time for instruction before they went to America. But the sisters were simply furious at the very idea, and the plan was consequently abandoned. Miss O'Brien also came to see me on the same subject. She was a connection of our family, and was taking an active part in promoting the welfare of emigrants. She offered to pay the rent of a house, and to give other substantial help if I was allowed to undertake this work, but permission was peremptorily refused. The fact was, the sisters were jealous of my work, and of my friends. If they had really cared for the poor all these petty feelings could not have existed. Would to God that I had even one-half of the money at my command to-day that I had at this time, and a glorious work could still be done for Ireland! The Irish people are beginning to see who are their true friends, and will not much longer allow every plan for their amelioration to be defeated by the selfishness of priests. Nor will they be cajoled into giving money to a Pope who has never done one act in all his long pontificate for their benefit.

When I was on my way to America I saw the Bishop of Cloyne at Queenstown, and had every expectation of getting a house established there, to correspond with one in America, for emigrant girls.

I believe the opposition to this plan, which I met from ecclesiastical authority in New York, was caused partly by a very absurd idea that my arrangements might interfere with those of Father Riordan, who had opened a sort of mission for girls at Castle Garden, and who was anxious to build a church

there, on the somewhat romantic idea that the girls who landed from Ireland should see a church immediately on their arrival. Certainly, if they had not learned their religion in Ireland, seeing a church when they landed in America would not teach them much. But building churches is always acceptable to certain ecclesiastics, and will always be encouraged, no matter how unnecessary they may be, or how heavy the debt incurred in consequence.

Poor Father Riordan is dead now, and his project has dwindled into insignificance. The Irish girls were a little too quick-witted to continue giving him money for a church when they needed an emigrant home. Later I came to see that the great objection to all my schemes was that they would have taught the people to be self-supporting and independent. An independent Ireland will never be a priest-ridden Ireland. If the girls had been taught by me to save their money, instead of giving it to the priests as they do, Ireland would have been better off in more ways than one.

While speaking of this subject I may say a word of the enormous tax put on the unfortunate Irish girl by the American priest. Every girl is obliged to pay a considerable portion of her wages to the priest on one excuse or another. I knew one case, a sample of thousands. In Boston recently a stir was made by the protests on the school question. Rome declared that the public schools were infidel and immoral, and redoubled her efforts to establish parochial schools. As the upper, or rather I should say the wealthier, class of American Romanists seldom give money to their Church, except when they need to influence the priests in election times, the principal support of the

Church comes from the poorer classes, and especially from working girls. The priests in Boston taxed the servant girls something like three dollars a month for the support of their schools. The average wages of these girls is twelve dollars a month (about two pounds ten shillings). This tax was for the schools alone. They had also to pay the usual fees for seats in church, hearing mass, etc., etc., and had to make all the other payments which Rome requires in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

My publisher told me that a girl who had lived with his family for years came to his wife and said she must leave her situation, as the priest told her she must pay this tax, and she knew Mrs. — would not advance her wages for such a purpose. When she told the priest that she had lived so long with the family, and felt it hard to leave, he told her she must go to another place and get more money as long as the "Church" wanted it; and she did go.

It is well known that the magnificent cathedral in New York, which is the pride of the American Catholic Church, was built mainly by Irish servant girls; and I have often heard them say bitterly, "If we want a seat we have to pay dear for it; and even then we are put near the door." The Catholic papers do not deny—rather, on occasion, they boast of it—that the Irish girl is the support of the Church. The German emigrant gives little indeed; and as for the Italian, if he did not have a church built for him, or had to pay a due to a priest, he could do very well without church or priest.

I spoke in the famous Presbyterian church in Fifth Avenue shortly before leaving New York. In the course of my lecture I said, "After all the Irish girl has done for her Church, when she falls ill, or becomes

poor, the Church relegates her to the charity of Protestants. The Presbyterians have endowed one of the finest hospitals in New York, but the beds are chiefly filled by Catholics." I stated this in the presence of the pastor, Dr. John Hall. When I had concluded my address he rose up, and with more energy and emphasis than I had supposed possible, endorsed every word I had said, and thanked me for saying it. The Catholic Church indeed boasts of spoiling the Egyptians, of taking everything from Protestants, and giving them nothing in return.

But the humbler class of Catholics are beginning to see how little care there is for them. No matter what money they have given to the Church, if they need attention in a hospital they must pay, and pay dearly, for the services of the sisters, which so many Protestants suppose are given gratis. If they are destitute in old age, no matter what they may have done for the Church when they were able to do it, they cannot find a home in any Catholic institution unless they or their friends pay for it. No one knows what a farce Catholic institutions are, or how very little is done for the poor, notwithstanding all the show which is made of the work of sisters. But the poor know it. It is but a few days since a Roman Catholic lady said to me, "I have often said to the priests, 'If there had been no evils in the Church there would not have been a Reformation. Why do you not reform the Church without waiting until it is done by force?'" There are thousands of Catholics to-day who know well how much reforming the Church needs, but who do not know how to forward the work. Rome, dead-weighted with her own infallibility, says, "I sit a queen, and have need of nothing."

At the time of which I write I was of course a Catholic, prepared to ask the approbation of the Church for every action ; but I was perplexed again and again to find how utterly indifferent the Church was to the service of the poor. Would to God that this book might be the means of opening the eyes of those who are so in love with Rome for her supposed abounding in good works ! There are thousands of Protestants—not all Ritualists—who think that the Roman Catholic Church is the Church of the poor, and that the sisters devote their lives in the most self-sacrificing manner to them. Let me say that there are thousands of Catholics who know too well what a farce the so-called religious Orders are. If they were all that fancy depicts them, or that Rome claims them to be, how is it that they have been suppressed in every Catholic country, and that they are only encouraged in Protestant countries, where the truth about them is not yet known ? I ask, in the name of God, that the statements which I am now about to make as to my own experience may be carefully considered and judged ; I state nothing which I cannot prove. If Rome is so anxious for the good of the poor, and as devoted to their interests as she professes to be, how was it that I was defeated and hindered in every plan for their benefit ? If the Irish priests are anxious for the real welfare of Ireland, how was it that they opposed with all their tremendous power every effort which I made for the benefit of the Irish people ? And, dear Irish friends who may read this book—as I hope many of you will—do look into this matter for yourselves. You all know the “Nun of Kenmare,” as you have loved to call me. Ask yourselves why was it that I was literally hunted ou

of Ireland? Why was it that I was not allowed to work for you, even when I had the approbation of so many Popes? These are questions which concern you. It is time for you to know your friends, and to look out for your best interests. And I would add, if these men whom you have too long trusted to act for you and to guide you are so indifferent, nay, even are so opposed to your temporal prosperity, how can you trust them with your far more important spiritual concerns?

Oh that Ireland would free herself with one brave stroke from the domination of Rome! She has never been the source of prosperity to any nation, because she has never been the fount of Gospel freedom.

Read what I write here, simple facts, and ask yourselves if Rome did well or wisely for your advantage when she drove me from a country which I loved not wisely for myself, but too well for a religion which does not desire its true prosperity.

I left Kenmare on November 16th, 1881, a day to be long remembered by me for many reasons. The echoes of the plaudits which had surrounded me for my work in the famine year had scarcely died away ere I was obliged to flee as an outcast in swift silence from the people whom, according to their own testimony, I had saved from famine and from "a pauper's grave." It was a striking lesson of the mutability of human things, and of the uncertainty of human gratitude. Scarcely a year had passed since the day when priests and people had held their indignation meeting, and told in bold, and at the time, I am sure, in sincere, language how they would give their lives for me, and how they would form a rampart around me to protect me from a threatened

danger. Scarcely a year had passed since the people of Ireland had placed on public record, in the public press, the statements which I have given in brief in the last chapter. Who would have supposed that they would have allowed one whom they had so honoured to leave them for ever? Poor people, they were not to blame!

I knew that there would have been some little stir if it became known that I was leaving Kenmare for ever, so I arranged to leave as quietly as possible. This exactly suited the sisters. As soon as they became convinced that I would leave, and that I would not suffer solitary confinement or any of the cruelties which they were pleased to inflict on me any longer, they desired to get me out of sight as quickly and as quietly as possible. For once we were of one mind.

At this time, having had experience of only one set of sisters and of one set of priests, I naturally and, as the event proved to my sorrow, wrongly concluded that others would certainly act differently. I admit I was stupid and blind; but I had so long had a romantic idea of the great perfection of the Church of Rome as a Church of the poor, and devoted to their interests, that I may be excused for requiring a good deal of experience before I was enlightened. And God has His own designs. It may be that in His providence He has allowed me to have all this suffering for the good of others.

If I had only my Kenmare experience to relate, it might be said that the sisters were an exception to the general rule, and that there were not many bishops who could be so cruel and unjust as Bishop Higgins. My wider experience proves that the state of things in

Kenmare is simply universal in the Catholic Church. Nor indeed need I point to my own experience alone. Who has not read the touching narrative of Edith O'Gorman, and her history of the cruelties which sisters can inflict on each other in the name of religion? and who has not shuddered at the narrative of the cruelties inflicted on the helpless children to whom they are supposed to act the part of mothers? It is useless for Rome to deny facts of which there are overwhelming proofs.

Besides this, there are few weeks during which some narrative does not come before the public of the doings of nuns, or in which there is not a history of some lady's experience of convent life, which confirms the record of others whom she has never seen and probably never heard of.

The public has information enough on this subject. It is time that the information should be used.

Before I left Kenmare I was wise enough, happily, to make all the arrangements required by the Church under such circumstances. This did not save me from the malicious cruelty of the Kenmare sisters, who even forged telegrams to injure me, as I shall show later; but it did enable me to prove my perfect uprightness of action, and to prove it from Roman Catholic sources, much to their discomfiture. It may seem almost incredible that women calling themselves Christians should have acted as they did, but I give ample proof of the unhappy facts.

I first corresponded with the sisters in Newry as to the advisability of my returning there. They were very anxious to have me. The sister of whom I have spoken earlier, Miss Fotrell, who had been in charge

of the novitiate when I entered, was now superioress, and I was very much attached to her, as she was to me. She had tried to protect me from the violence of the very sister who was now the superioress in Kenmare. There was certainly a great deal of quarrelling amongst the Newry sisters, but *noblesse oblige*, even in convents—they were nearly all ladies, and had at least social advantages over the Kenmare sisterhood. I knew also that Miss Fotrell had written some very sharp letters to Kenmare, as she had heard in some way of the scandalous treatment which I was receiving there. Her interference was of no benefit to me, but all the same I was obliged to her. It was something, at least, to have a little sympathy in my desolate state.

But I had also been in correspondence with Father Cavanagh, of Knock, in the County Mayo. The Catholic world had been ringing with the account of an apparition of the Virgin Mary which had been said to have occurred there. At last Catholic Ireland had asserted herself. From some cause, it was said, because it was too near England, no apparitions had taken place in Ireland, and the Irish were sore on the subject. The French had La Sallette and Lourdes, and money flowed like water into both places. Ireland was at last to have an apparition of her own, and to show the world that she was not forgotten by the saints in heaven. I was naturally very anxious to visit the shrine. I had been so ill for years that I had seldom been able to leave my room, and I had not been able to kneel from chronic rheumatism for many months. The fact was that I was utterly broken down by the treatment which I had been enduring for so many years, and the only wonder was that my

mind had not given way. I believe that I was saved, in the providence of God, by my intense interest in my literary work, and my love for the poor.

It seemed to me also that Knock was just the place to carry out the project which I had in view for the help of the poor Irish ; and, as it will be seen later, the archbishop of that diocese agreed with me. In the meantime, the sisters were in a state of frenzy on the subject of my money. They knew very well they must give up some of it. I said I would not ask more than a thousand pounds, but that I must have this. For very shame they agreed ; when all was arranged I said to Miss Lowry (Sister Mary Teresa). " You can keep this money until you hear from me. If I go to Newry you know the sisters will insist on having it ; " and I knew they would, though I had left them money when going to Kenmare, which should have been sufficient. " If I remain in Knock, I may not want it ; for I am certain if I make a foundation there I shall get all I need."

I ask attention. I enter on these details for a purpose. It is necessary to understand them to show the scheme which was speedily put into execution to ruin all the good I planned to do at Knock. I also insisted that both my confessor and my secretary should travel with me. It was well I had so much foresight, but I little anticipated what followed ; indeed, my state of health was such that it was a risk for me to travel at all, and I needed the care of the secretary whom I had employed, and who had been so faithful to me for many years. I was sincerely attached to my confessor. He was a comparatively young man, but showed already great promise, and was very prudent. I had assisted his brother very largely in

'79, for he had one of the poorest parishes in Kerry, and had many a letter of thanks from him.

I had a close carriage ordered, so as to escape observation, and steal out of the village where I had worked for the people for so many years. Poor people, they said afterwards if they had known they would have taken the horses from the carriage, and dragged me back again. I am sure many of them would have done so ; but of what avail ? They could not have protected me from the tyranny of the sisters, nor from the bishop's injustice. Do not let the poor Irish be blamed too much for their faults, or the outrages which they commit. They are in the hands of men who know no mercy, and have no interest in the welfare of the country. When the priest has provided for his nephews and his nieces, for his brothers and brothers-in-law, and sometimes for more doubtful connections, he is satisfied. What interest has he in a country in which he has no stake ? Priests have no families to provide for ; they have no wives to look after ; they have no sons whom they care to see advanced in society. What is the permanence or prosperity of society to them ? If the bishop is pleased, and if the Pope gets all the money which he demands, and if they have all that they require, what further interest have they ? Rome never did a wiser thing for her temporal interests than when she enforced the celibacy of the clergy, and made them a class apart, an *imperium in imperio*. Protestants never did a more fatal act than when they made it possible for such men to rule a nation.

Miss Lowry, the superioress, was perfectly well aware of my plans when I left Kenmare, and they had all the ecclesiastical sanction necessary. In fact,

my confessor had to obtain leave to travel with me, for no priest can leave his post even for a few hours without permission. I positively declined to have any communications myself with Bishop Higgins before I left, in consequence of his treatment of me for so many years ; but, according to the rules of the Order, it was quite the same for matters to be arranged through the superioress.

I was obliged to rest a night in Killarney on my way to Knock, as my health made it impossible for me to travel any distance. I was received with the greatest kindness at the different convents where I stayed a night. They had all benefited largely by my help. I gained some valuable information. I found in one convent that the priest had taken a dislike to a sister, and was doing all he could to make her life a burden to her, acting towards her just as Bishop Higgins had acted to me. It was something worth knowing, as it showed me how farspread the evil was, and that mine was by no means a solitary case, as I learned more fully later. If I visited any of these convents to-day, and were starving for food, the sisters dare not give me a mouthful of bread, or even a glass of cold water. And people imagine that Rome has become liberal, and has ceased to persecute.

I was warmly welcomed to Knock by Archdeacon Cavanagh, and I found my health wonderfully restored. Whether it was the effect of the complete change and sudden freedom from a life which was little short of inhuman, or whether it was faith cure, I know not. At the time I naturally referred the recovery of my health to the efficacy of the Knock manifestations ; but I was by no means prepared to

believe them without further investigation. The results of this investigation I shall relate presently. I had already received a warm invitation to visit Knock from Archdeacon Cavanagh, which I append here. It is important for reasons which will presently appear.

“KNOCK, *November 16th, 1881.*

“DEAR SISTER MARY FRANCIS CLARE,—It is my highest ambition and most ardent desire to see a convent established at Knock, as I am convinced that it would prove productive of incalculable good, and the source of numberless blessings to the people, not only of the locality, but to the many pious pilgrims who resort here from America, and so many other countries.

“I trust that you will, in the merciful designs of God, become the founder of the religious community so earnestly longed for, as I am satisfied that under your benign care the good work would prosper and succeed.

“I trust that nothing will deter you from complying with my request.

“I remain, dear Sister Clare,

“Yours faithfully in Jesus Christ,

“B. CAVANAGH, P.P., *Archdeacon.*”

I now decided to remain at Knock and found a convent there, if the Archbishop of Tuam gave his consent. I had left Kenmare under the arrangement that I was to do this or return to Newry, as I thought best. The fact that I left the thousand pounds at Kenmare pending my decision is sufficient evidence that the sisters were fully aware of the arrangement, and the fact that my confessor travelled with me to

Knock was another proof, if proof were needed, that all was done according to the rules of the Church to which I then belonged. I had also taken the precaution to write to Archbishop McEvilly before I left Kenmare, to ask his permission to establish a convent at Knock, and had asked him to reply to me at Knock to the care of Father Cavanagh. If I had foreseen the storm which was to break later on my devoted head, through the malice of the Kenmare sisters, I could not have acted more prudently. Indeed, I am convinced that God Himself inspired me in what I did ; for however they may have desired to injure me, I was not altogether delivered into their hands.

When I arrived at Knock I found a letter awaiting me from the archbishop, which I append here. It has been published many times, but it is necessary to the understanding of what follows to place it on record now :—

“TUAM, *November 13th, 1881.*

“MY DEAR MOTHER CLARE,—I intended leaving here next week, but as you promise to favour us with a visit, I shall remain here on Monday and Tuesday to see you, and I shall promise you the hospitality of the good nuns here during your stay.

“The idea you have in your mind, and wish to carry out, is admirable, and worthy of a religious soul ; and I am sure it is one that must commend itself to every one that has the salvation of souls at heart. If it had the effect of encouraging emigration, I could not for a moment have anything to say to it. There is plenty of room and to spare for all our people at home, if things were well managed. No people feel more keenly than do our Irish Catholics the force of the Psalmist’s words, ‘ Better is a little to the

just than great riches to the wicked ' (Psalm xxxv. 16). Nor is there any part of what I conceive to be a good bill, taken all in all—a bill which, in my mind, is entitled to a fair trial (the late Tenant Bill)—so objectionable as that portion of it that has reference to emigration. Still, regarded from your point of view, considering that people will emigrate, I think your scheme entitled to every consideration and practicable encouragement. It has for its object to mitigate a necessary evil, and save souls that might otherwise have been lost for ever. As such, I cannot but encourage it.

“Very faithfully yours,

“JOHN MCEVILLY, *Archbishop of Tuam.*”

I was, in fact, if possible, over-cautious in taking care that I should have not only the usual episcopal permission, but even approbation, for what I did. If I had foreseen my future troubles I could scarcely have acted more judiciously ; but I was to learn, all too soon, that neither prudence nor justice nor the most exact observance of religious discipline would avail where ecclesiastics, who should have been the first to protect a woman and a sister, were determined to prevent her from carrying out the charitable works which they profess to admire.

I had all the canonical permission necessary, and I acted throughout in accordance with the rules of the Church to which I then belonged.

I could not induce Father Neligan to go with me to Tuam, nor was there really the least occasion for him to do so, and I believe, if he had done so, the result would not have been different, as far as I am concerned.

It will be observed that the archbishop highly approved of my plans, and, as I have already said, it was no new, sudden idea; it was a design long cherished, but which was quite hopeless to attempt, in consequence of the opposition of the sisters, while I remained in Kenmare.

I was very kindly received in the Presentation Convent at Tuam, and had an interview with the archbishop the next morning. He asked me to remain with the Presentation sisters for the present, and they cordially seconded his wish. My first desire was to get the written permission of the archbishop for the foundation at Knock. Dr. McEvilly assured me many times that "his word" was quite sufficient, and seemed to think it unreasonable that I should ask a written authorisation; but I was persistent.

I think I arrived in Tuam on Monday. On Tuesday this interview took place. The archbishop said he would give the leave in writing later on; I replied, I would willingly wait a fortnight if he wished it, but that he must remember the peculiar position I was in, and see how necessary it was for me to have such a document.

The next day, Wednesday, November 23rd, the archbishop told me that he sat down to his desk to write letters, that some impulse, for which he could not account, came over him, and he wrote the document subjoined here. This document he left on his desk in an envelope directed to me, intending to bring it to me himself. To his surprise, he found the letter gone, and on asking the servant about it, the man told him he had posted it. The archbishop told me the man had never acted in this way before, and said to me next day, I must have thought it stiff and

formal to have sent it by post, as the archbishop's house and the convent were opposite each other.

“TUAM, *November 23rd, 1881.*

“DEAR MOTHER MARY CLARE,—It gives us great pleasure to accede to your request to be permitted to build a convent of your Order at Knock, in this diocese of Tuam. This permission is merely conditional at present. We grant it on condition that, before the foundation of the projected convent is laid, ample funds are provided for bringing the building to a successful conclusion, and security given for ample pre-existing funds for the permanent support of the sisters who may be located there to do the work of God. We would, moreover, have it distinctly understood, that in thus acceding to your pious request, it is by no means to be inferred that we sanction or approve of the alleged apparitions or miracles said to have occurred at Knock. As at present disposed, we neither approve nor disapprove of such; we reserve our judgment until the time comes, if ever, for canonically and judicially investigating the whole matter. But at present we neither admit nor reject the alleged occurrences. So that we are in a position to approach the consideration of the subject with a perfectly unbiased mind.

“Commending your pious undertaking to the mercy of God, to the favour of His ever-glorious and Immaculate Mother, and her chaste spouse, St. Joseph, the Foster Father of the Son of God, and patron of the Universal Church,

“Very faithfully yours,

“JOHN, *Archbishop of Tuam.*”

Several things should be noticed in this document. First, the archbishop required that sufficient funds

should be obtained before the convent was commenced. Second, he takes the opportunity of disassociating the work altogether from any connection with the alleged miracles at Knock. In this connection the archbishop uses an expression which I found was a favourite one, and one which was as unpleasant to those in whose regard it was used as it was convenient to himself. He says, "*as at present disposed*, we neither approve nor disapprove of such." In time to come, I had many weary hours in consequence of this bishop's curious style of not deciding either for or against anything. In such a case as that of deciding for or against a miraculous shrine there may have been need of this non-committal policy, but when this happened in ordinary cases, which required a decision for or against a certain course of action, it caused very serious trouble.

I learned, later on, from many of the archbishop's own priests, that this was his favourite answer under all circumstances. Father Cavanagh came to me at Tuam, and was greatly rejoiced at the archbishop's approval of our plans. I am convinced that there was not an ecclesiastic in Ireland who would have taken a greater interest in my work for the poor or would have encouraged it more heartily than the Archbishop of Tuam, but circumstances were against him as well as against myself.

Full of hope and joy, I at once sent out appeals for help, and found encouragement on every side. The dear and good reverend mother of the Presentation Convent handed me £5, a large gift from their poverty, so that she might have the honour of giving the first donation for the work at Knock.

I heard later that, as vicar-capitular, Bishop Higgins had no power to grant me permission to remove from

Kenmare to any other convent. I give no opinion on this subject, however, nor would I note it, except that he made so many criticisms on the actions of other bishops.

That he was urged to act as he did by others I have no doubt ; but the acts were none the less his own. I have heard from friends on whose word I could entirely rely, that the Kenmare sisters were greatly disconcerted when they found that I had received such a warm welcome in Tuam, and that I was about to undertake such an important work, and naturally they wished to prevent its accomplishment.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CARDINAL'S TYRANNY.—A BLAMELESS NUN PUT OUT ON THE STREETS.

“O Thou dear Shepherd, leave us not to sicken ;

* * * * *

At evening bring us home.”

SHIRLEY.

“Woe unto you ! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.”—LUKE xi. 47.

I AM, or rather I used to be, naturally sanguine. When I found that Archdeacon McEvilly gave so ready a consent, and approved my plans so warmly, I was overjoyed, and hoped that at last I could work out my long-cherished idea for the good of poor Ireland. He had arranged for me to remain for a little while with the Presentation sisters, who were very kind to me, and seemed to be on more harmonious terms with each other than was usual in convents. I was anxious, for several reasons, to return to Knock for a few days, and obtained a ready permission from the archbishop to do so. Every one was congratulating me, as his grace was not popular, and it was supposed that he never would have given his approval to such an undertaking. Though I had to suffer a great deal while under his jurisdiction I certainly liked him better than many with whom I had to do. Like every Catholic bishop he had serious difficulties with his priests, and some of his actions in their regard

were perhaps the result of expediency, or of what he would have considered permissible diplomacy.

He was placed in a peculiar position. The great Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. McHale, had only just died. During his lifetime Dr. McEvilly had been his co-adjutor, but during all these years neither one of these apostles of Christ opened his lips to the other. If the world only knew the rivalries, the jealousies, and the quarrels which are carried on in the holy Catholic Church, the world would have a different opinion of it. But all this is kept secret, especially from Protestants. The pains that are taken to throw a veil of silence over the grave scandals in the Church should be known to be appreciated. Dr. McHale wanted to have his nephew and namesake made Bishop of Tuam, but I believe the English Catholics, already offended with the conduct of the uncle, would have none of the nephew. And yet we are told all the time that everything is decided by the Holy Ghost, and that Rome is purely disinterested in her choice of prelates. I doubt if ever a bishop or pope was elected in the Church of Rome for his personal merits. I heard from many of the priests of the diocese that Dr. McEvilly left no stone unturned to secure his appointment. At all events, he obtained it. The two bishops were obliged to celebrate mass together constantly, and to pass the "kiss of peace," but never a word did they speak either in church or elsewhere, and each opposed the arrangements of the other in every way possible.

But another storm was soon to burst on my devoted head. On my return to Tuam I was amazed to find that the archbishop was in an awful state of mind. The good reverend mother of the Presentation Convent was all of a tremble, for she was old, and

nervous, and accustomed, as most superiors are, to episcopal outburst with or without reason. She could not tell me what had happened, and I could not imagine what could have occurred. I knew all had been settled in the proper way. But I was soon informed. I was sent for to the parlour to have an interview with his grace. He was in a fearful rage, and for many reasons I do not wonder. At first I could not make out what was wrong, but by waiting and some quiet questioning I found that some one had written to him to say I had left Kenmare without leave, and that this being so, he had no right to receive me into his diocese. I knew, alas! who had done this evil deed. I had two enemies who were truly enemies without a cause. One was the superioress in Kenmare and some of the sisters, and the other was an ecclesiastical wasp, Father Angus, whom some of the priests had named Father Anguis. I suspect that the sisters had managed to get some one to alarm the bishop, and that Father Angus would have been their ready instrument. Whether he was guilty in this particular instance or not I do not know. I have evidence enough that he was guilty over and over again at a later period.

One of the gravest evils of the Catholic Church is, that you are liable to be condemned at any time without being allowed to face your accusers or even to know who they are. The world congratulates itself that the Inquisition has ceased to exist. I am a living proof that it still exists. All the principles of the Inquisition are in full force, even the name. The only difference between the Inquisition now and the Inquisition in its prime, is that it cannot now execute its victims. But there is nothing whatsoever to prevent it from inflicting the most cruel mental tortures,

I have been again and again accused of certain ecclesiastical faults, which I had proved I had never committed, and have been refused the names of my accusers, or any information beyond the bare statement that I had done what I had never done, nor even thought of doing. And this is a common custom in convent life.

The bishop is judge, jury, and executioner, and he decides as his inclinations move him. I asked, and asked in vain, who had made the charge against me which was so cruelly injurious to me at the moment when I had hoped for peace. I asked for precise details of the charge, but they would not give them to me. It was an hour of anguish, and I have had many such.

It was in vain, also, that I pointed out to the archbishop that I had come to Knock with my confessor, and that he had accompanied me, and left me there, by the permission of Bishop Higgins ; further, that I had written to both Bishop Higgins and to the Bishop of Newry, and had received satisfactory letters from both. He said a very "exalted personage" charged me with having left Kenmare without the leave of any superior, the gravest charge which could be brought against a sister, and of course the very exalted personage must be right.

Unless such very exalted personages get into direct collision with Rome, which happens sometimes, they are always right, and there is no more to be said. The Kenmare sisters, as I learned later, were the originators of all the trouble. Such malice, let us hope, rarely exists, even in the Catholic Church. I have written on this subject more fully than I should otherwise have done, because I hope this book will be read with

interest by many Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic Church has only found two accusations to make against me. One is that I am insane, which amuses them, and does me no harm. The other is the ridiculous one, which a Protestant can hardly understand, but the malice of which is very patent to a Romanist, that I left Kenmare without leave. This theme has been harped on in every possible way over and over again, though the proof to the contrary has long been before the public, and, at my request, the whole matter was investigated in Rome, and it was decided that there was not even the shadow of a ground for such a charge. It only shows what sisters can be made to suffer when any one is inclined to injure them without any cause whatsoever.

As the archbishop refused me information, I could only reply that as he would not tell me what I was accused of, nor who were my accusers, I could say nothing. Certainly he acted unjustly; and it is precisely this unfortunate policy of condemning people without allowing them any chance of being heard, or of knowing who are their accusers, which brings such discredit on the Roman Church.

I said at once, "Well, your grace, you have been very kind to me; I will not embarrass you further; I can go to Newry Convent. I know how glad they would be to have me there." To Kenmare I had determined never to go again. I know now they hoped to drive me back there by depriving me of a home elsewhere; but I knew if they had made me suffer so much before I left, how much more suffering would they not have inflicted on me if I came back defeated in all my hopes! It is very painful to me to be obliged to write of sisters and priests as I have done, but I

believe that it is my duty to tell the truth. Those who expose the injuries and injustices which are done in public institutions receive the support of all honest men, though they certainly are not commended by those whom they expose. In the Roman Church evil is concealed and exposure prevented under the most severe penalties. The man who dares to speak is put under a ban, and is condemned for "attacking the Church." A man might as justly be condemned for attacking the government because he denounced violations of law. Yet, if the evil done in the Church is shielded and concealed, so much the worse for the Church; but if the evil is a blot on the Church, why does the Church condemn those who denounce it? But if faults are condemned, those who do the evil should be condemned also; and if the Church allowed this, she must denounce some of her most exalted children.

I heard later also from some of the girls who attended the convent schools in Kenmare, that the sisters hoped, if they could not drive me back to Kenmare, at least that they could prevent me from making a foundation at Knock. They knew well that I should have more opportunities of doing good there, and for doing the work which they would not allow me to do, and this was enough to make them act as they did. Their interference was also contrary to the rules of the Church for which they professed so much zeal. According to a very proper regulation in the Catholic Church, when a sister is transferred from one diocese to another, she ceases to be under the control of the bishop or the superioress of the diocese which she has left. Therefore, the only person who had any right to interfere or to express any dissatisfaction was the

Bishop of Newry, and I had his approval of what I had done. He was a good and peaceable old man, and only anxious that I should have opportunities to do the work on which my heart had been so long set. He was my friend in all my troubles, and he had a very good idea, from the statements of those sisters who had left Kenmare and returned to Newry, of how things were carried out there, and of what I had suffered. I will add here the letter from my confessor on this accusation for the benefit of Catholic readers who have been deceived by the sisters.

“THE PRESBYTERY, KENMARE, *March 9th, 1882.*

“MY VERY DEAR SISTER F. CLARE,—Your letter of this morning simply astounds me. The calumny that you left Kenmare without the proper permission from your superiors is too absurd. Dont mind; patience and resignation will right things.

“I accompanied you at the request of the mother abbess here, and with the sanction of the bishop, then *vicar-cap.*

“When we arrived at Knock, Archdeacon Cavanagh was so enthusiastic about your foundation there, that I thought it quite unnecessary to remain longer than the few days I did.

“As well as I remember, the Archbishop of Tuam expressed himself similarly by letter to you. You wrote to me afterwards, saying his grace’s interview at Tuam tended to the same result. Hence, things being so, I am simply bewildered at its being even mooted that you left Kenmare without the necessary permission. I *repeat again*, you had the fullest sanction, and *that* from your superiors, to leave.

“You have now thrown yourself into the good cause

at Knock, and that, together with your many years of most valuable service here, and particularly your splendid and successful efforts during the late famine years, will soon put an end to these false reports.

“Sincerely wishing you health and success in the cause of God and our country, in which you have always laboured so hard and unselfishly,

“My very dear Sister F. C.,

“Yours as ever,

“M. NELIGAN, C.C.”

Fortunately I have the original of this, and of all important letters. I don't know how I came to keep them, but I believe I was guided to do so by a very special providence ; for if I had not had them in my possession their existence would have been denied. Probably the writers would have been compelled by the Church to declare that they had never written any such letters. The case of the sister in Kenmare who was compelled to deny what she had so positively and truthfully affirmed about Mrs. O'Hagan under pressure of her tormentors will be remembered as a case in point. I could give many others.

When I found that Dr. McEvilly had taken the matter so much to heart I offered to return to Newry; but he would not hear of this. In fact, he was like a man beside himself. I knew later that he had a look-out for an advancement in the Church, and all lapses of a bishop are kindly reported to Rome by those who are opposed to his future elevation. Politicians are credited with having very little conscience where their political interests are concerned ; but I think, of the two, Roman Catholic ecclesiastics are the least scrupulous when bent on attaining their ends. I was told

afterwards by some of the archbishop's own priests, that he had resolved to get rid of me, but how to accomplish this in the face of his written acceptance was a perplexity to him. It would seem as if a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic can never do anything in a straightforward manner. I told him I was quite willing to return to Newry Convent, and offered three times to do so. At the same time I told him that if he did not accept my offer I would not repeat it.

I saw clearly that every means was being used to place me in a false position before the public, so that they might lose confidence in me; and I knew I had to do with those who would not hesitate to commit any act which might compass their ends. How utterly they failed is an evidence of the justice of my cause. If there had been the least real flaw in my case, or if I had taken, even through inadvertence, an imprudent step, all would have been over for me. As it was, God fought for me; for while my enemies were doing their best to make me take some false step they could publicly condemn, they themselves were guilty of actions which have brought on them the honest reprobation of every one who has been made cognisant of the facts. It was Christmas time, and it might have been supposed that the season of the year and the unusually severe weather would have pleaded for me. But no; Rome knows no mercy when she has a point to gain.

The bishop required me to go to Newry Convent to see the bishop, Dr. Leahy, and to get from him what he called a "canonical transfer" to his diocese. Every step in this affair is well worth noting by those who would understand the trials and the gross injustices to which sisters, or indeed any one, can be subjected

by ecclesiastical authority, and who would see how utterly they are at the mercy of men who have no scruples and no heart. Is a power like this to be given daily more and more liberty?

It was quite unnecessary for me to go to Newry, for a letter from me to the Newry Bishop would have brought the required reply; besides, I had already received all the permission necessary by telegraph, and had handed it to Dr. McEvilly. His object, as one of the priests told me afterwards, was to get me to leave his diocese, no matter on what pretence, and then to keep me out of it—a plan which he tried, but in which he failed signally. If I had only had one Christian friend to have helped me in my dire need, how many years' suffering I might have been spared! But God's ways are not ours. If I had not gone through all the bitter trials which I shall now narrate, Protestants would have lost much valuable information as to the true state of the Church of Rome, and perhaps my sufferings may be the means of saving thousands, if only they are a warning as to the danger of giving power where power is always abused.

The archbishop, always crafty, and never doing anything in a straightforward way, said he would tell me next morning what he had decided. In the morning accordingly he sent for me after he had said mass, and told me I was to go by the next train to Dublin *en route* for Newry, and that if I would bring him the desired document he would "receive me back with open arms." Either he thought I should not get what he sent me for, or he hoped in some way to circumvent me; for it will be seen presently that he had not the least intention of fulfilling his promise. I doubt if ever such treachery was practised on any one. My

case is an evidence of how far the promises of Rome can be relied on when it is found convenient to break them for the good of the Church or the convenience of the bishop. I set out at once, determined to give him no excuse. I was accompanied by my faithful secretary, Miss Downing, who felt for me sincerely. She had no love for the Kenmare sisters. Simply because I liked her, her sisters were made the objects of all kinds of petty persecutions in the convent schools, and deliberately kept from advancement as monitresses, to which they were entitled. No doubt this was natural under the circumstances, and was just what unsanctified human nature would have been guilty of, but human nature needs to be looked after. The inmates of all public institutions are under the protection of the law; the inmates of convents have no protection, and it is time that they had.

I had a terrible journey. The snow was falling heavily, and of course there were no travelling comforts in Irish railway cars. When I arrived at the Convent of Poor Clares in Harold's Cross, I was warmly welcomed by the sisters. I had also been of service to them in '79. These sisters were looked on as a sort of mother house, all the other Irish convents of Poor Clares having been founded from them. Their position was anomalous; but as it was fully authorised by the Holy See, and had been for many years, no one could complain of their way of living. This, however, did not in the least deter Father Angus from abusing me roundly for not doing what the Pope had forbidden to be done. I was so weary that I rested the next day; and on the following morning I set out for Newry, which is but a few hours' journey from Dublin. Fearing treachery, and not knowing whom to trust, or

what might happen, I determined to return to Tuam as quickly as possible. In order to do this, I left Dublin by an early train, and arrived in Newry at a convenient hour to enable me to go back to Dublin the same evening. The Bishop of Newry was honestly perplexed at the whole business, as well he might be, and said so. He knew that I had all the permissions necessary; but he said, anxious to do me a good turn, "Well, I will make this so strong that no one can dispute it." He was interested in my plan for training girls, and knew for many reasons it could not be carried out in Newry. He begged of me to persevere through all difficulties, and assured me of his interest and all the help which his influence could give me. He stood very high in the esteem of the other bishops, so that a word from him ought to have ended all the trouble; but of what avail was it when there were persons who were determined that it should not be ended?

I posted a copy of the document, which I subjoin, to Dr. McEvilly at once; and certainly no words could be plainer.

"CONVENT OF SAINT CLARE, NEWRY,
"December 16th, 1881.

"MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,—I release Sister M. Francis Clare Cusack from whatever canonical obedience she owes to me as Bishop of Dromore; and I hereby transfer that obedience to your Grace. With sincere esteem,

"Your Grace's obedient servant in Christ,

"BROTHER JOHN PIUS LEAHY, O.P.,

"Bishop of Dromore.

"TO MOST REV. DR. MCEVILLY, *Lord Bishop of Tuam.*"

So rejoiced was I, that had there been any way of going to Tuam across Ireland, even by travelling day and night, without going through Dublin, I think I should have gone. All was settled now, and it seemed as if nothing more was needed to begin the great work for poor Irish girls, on which my heart had been so long set.

I arrived in Dublin late at night, and hastened to Harold's Cross Convent. I saw that the sisters were greatly disturbed and distressed, but I could not imagine the cause ; in fact, they knew not how to break the terrible news to me. At last I was told everything. Cardinal McCabe, who had not been in the convent I think for four years, had called there early with his chaplain, and given orders that I was to be put out on the streets of Dublin.

The sisters were greatly distressed, and asked what I had done to receive such treatment. His eminence refused any information; but to relieve them he sent his chaplain to the nearest telegraph office with orders to send a telegram after me, to forbid my entering his diocese again. This telegram I never received ; and what is still more remarkable, I could never get any trace of it from the post-office authorities. I therefore returned, as I have said, to the convent. One dear sister so far kept her presence of mind and allowed her charity to overcome her fear of ecclesiastical censure, as to implore the cardinal on her knees to allow me that one night's shelter, as they knew I could not return till late, and it was a bitter night. His eminence granted her request, but only on one condition—that I should be put out on the streets of Dublin at daybreak next morning. The sisters wrote to me a year after, to say how they had wondered at my calmness, or that

I could have borne the blow as patiently as I did, but I said, "Well, it is a great trial, but I can return to Tuam to-morrow," and I thought how much pleased the archbishop would be to receive such a document. He had sent me for it; he had declared he would receive me "with open arms" when I came back; all would be well, and God would enable me to bear the great fatigue and excitement. How could I for a moment imagine that he had sent me for a document *which he did not intend to accept?*

But a short time only had passed when I was handed a telegram from Archbishop McEvilly, which is now before me as I write.

[From the Archbishop of Tuam.]

"TO SISTER MARY FRANCIS CLARE CUSACK, *Harold's Cross, Dublin,*—

"Don't come to the diocese till consent is given by me in writing, and I judge first if the letter be satisfactory."

I soon saw that all had been carefully pre-arranged; for a few moments after I received a telegram from the reverend mother of the Presentation Convent in Tuam, where I had been staying, saying the archbishop had "commanded" her not to receive me into her convent again.

I could not help thinking that if I had been accused of committing a theft or a murder I should have been better treated. At least, I should have had a fair trial; I should have been told what were the charges against me. I was, indeed, in a difficult position, and had not one to advise with except the faithful companion who stood by me in all my troubles. I had,

at least, the night for reflection, thanks to the humanity of the dear sister, who pleaded with my inexorable judge. I am sure the Kenmare Sisters thought I should be driven back to them for refuge; but even had I wished to go to them, another set of canonical proceedings must have been set going to release me from Tuam diocese.

And yet only one short week before this terrible day, Archbishop McEvilly had written to me that the work which I hoped to do for poor girls was "admirable." "The idea," he said, "you have in your mind, and wish to carry out, is admirable, and worthy of a religious soul, and I am sure it is one that must commend itself to every one that has the salvation of souls at heart."

Houseless, homeless, and desolate, I was put out on the streets of Dublin on that Saturday morning.

Even now I can scarcely bear to think or to write of these things, or to recall those hours of anguish. I had escaped from cruelty in Kenmare to find myself the victim of treachery in Tuam.

I do not think it would have been possible for Dr. McEvilly to have been guilty of, or to have allowed the refinements of cruelty which Bishop Higgins inflicted on those who were in his power, but Dr. McEvilly could never go a straight course when a crooked one was possible. I believe this was less his fault than the fault of the system under which he was reared. Those who meet a cardinal in public or at a social gathering, and admire his bland courtesy and his wonderful benevolence, know little what may have been his occupation during the preceding hour, or what acts of injustice to helpless women, or even to helpless priests, he may have perpetrated.

I was told in Rome that I knew more canon law than many of the bishops in Ireland. I knew enough canon law and had sufficient common-sense to see that all my persecutors were wrong in their accusations against me. But of what avail was this knowledge? They had the power to do whatever injustice they pleased, and they pleased to be cruelly and meanly unjust. There was one resource which might have availed me if I could have benefited by it. I had always found a friend in the Archbishop of Cashel, Dr. Croke; and he and the Dublin cardinal were open and public enemies. Dr. Croke had supported Parnell, whom he so hotly denounced afterwards, and Cardinal McCabe was the bitter and vindictive opponent of Parnell and all his works. It would have been a glorious triumph for the Archbishop of Cashel to have found the Archbishop of Dublin guilty of an act of inexcusable inhumanity, and of an open and flagrant breach of canon law, in expelling a sister, without any cause whatsoever, from her convent. My first thought was to go to Dr. Croke, and ask his protection; but I learned from the best authority that he was seriously ill. Dublin was at the time wild with political excitement, carefully fomented by the priests. The people hated the cardinal, and one word from me of his treatment of me would have set Dublin in a blaze. I knew not what the consequences might be, so I kept my unhappy position secret.

The cardinal's door had been decked over and over again with emblems of death, coffins had been placed outside, and other gruesome effigies had not been wanting to tell him the popular feeling. But it was all in vain. I knew later that one of his reasons

for doing me this injustice was all that I had done for the poor, which was a crime in his eyes. The Irish people were a rebellious people, and any one who sympathised with them, even so far as to assist in keeping them alive, had committed a crime not to be forgiven.* All my actions were watched, and carefully misrepresented. Some one had sent a considerable sum of money to Kenmare to have a cushion embroidered for Mr. Parnell while he was in gaol. I had nothing to do with the matter whatsoever, but all the same I was accused of the crime of doing it. The fact was, that the work was done by an English sister who hated Parnell as cordially as the cardinal, but who made the remark, when the order and money were sent, that she hated Parnell like the devil, still she would do it for the devil to get the money.

I am not sure now, but, to the best of my recollection, I never even saw the work. But that did not matter. It was reported—possibly by the sisters to screen themselves—that I was the originator of the whole affair.

I had spent the night thinking where I could go safely and quietly, and decided to take temporary shelter with a Mr. M——n, at whose house I knew sisters often stopped when passing through Dublin, and whom I had employed for some years as an agent for the sale of my books.

* When the Knock apparitions were first noised abroad I received a letter from Lady B——, which I kept for a long time ; it was so truly a curiosity of religious literature. She said she could not possibly believe in them, not because she doubted that such things were likely to occur in the "Church ;" but because the Irish were so wicked, she could not believe that "our blessed lady would come to them." Now the teaching of Rome is, that Mary is the Refuge of the sinner, and that the more wicked you are, the more she will do for you.

He was astonished at my arrival, but so fearful was I of public scandal, or of exciting feeling against Cardinal McCabe, that I did not tell even him why I had come to his house. He received me most kindly, and proceeded at once to do all that he could for me.

When I went to pay the driver who brought me to his house, he asked me was I "the Nun of Kenmare, the good sister who had saved so many people from famine"? I replied, sadly enough, that I was. "And do you think I would be mane enough to take money from you that kept the life in the Irish people and children?" And he drove off in all haste, to show his determination not to be paid.

I now had to consider carefully what I should do. I knew that, according to the canon law of the Roman Catholic Church, all the bishops concerned had made very grave mistakes. I belonged canonically to the Tuam diocese by the archbishop's own request; but of what use were my rights, or the rights of the case, when those who were in power were determined to violate them, and had the power to do so? Only those who were on the inside track of affairs in Ireland at this time could understand all the secret work which was going on. The bishops were divided, the people were divided. There was the dynamite party, ever growing in strength; there were the cautious, selfish men who were prepared to shout for Home Rule with one breath, and with the next to announce their acceptance of any office which might be given them to purchase their silence. It was, it always will be, a miserable, distracted country while it is ruled by a foreign power.

The people were with me, I knew, but I knew also that a hint from a priest would send a bullet through the best beloved landlord in Ireland, no matter what he might have done for the country. I knew, no matter what gratitude they might have had for what I had done for them, if I was denounced by the "Church," a majority of the Irish people, at least, would not dare to take my part. Such is the power of Rome—a power which, be it well understood, she possesses only as long as Protestants choose to give it to her. I had sent for the priest who was chaplain to the sisters before I left Harold's Cross Convent, in the early dawn of the winter morning, and placed my case before him. Somehow I had not yet lost all my faith in human nature, or in bishops. It seemed to me—at least, it was the ostensible teaching of Rome—that it was the duty of a bishop to inquire into a case before he judged it, and not to condemn unheard. I knew I had justice, even Roman Catholic justice, on my side. I was on my lawful business; I had the telegram of the Archbishop of Tuam, showing that he had sent me to Dublin—a very important matter for me. I had simply gone to Harold's Cross in obedience to my bishop, to do a certain thing which he had required me to do, and I had done it. But what was the result? I was put out on the streets of Dublin without a word of explanation or excuse.

I said to myself, "Surely the cardinal cannot know the whole case; if he did, he would not be so unjust;" and I asked the priest, would he not take a letter from me to the cardinal, and show him the archbishop's telegram, which would prove that I had simply obeyed his orders, and that he wished me to wait until he had seen the document for which he

had sent me before I returned to his diocese? I also said I would send with him to the cardinal the letter which Dr. Leahy had given me, than which nothing could have been plainer. But the priest, while expressing a guarded sympathy with me, told me he dared not do what I asked. The cardinal never allowed any explanations. When he said anything he never changed, and he never gave a reason. Later I learned that there was an actual reign of terror in the diocese of Dublin. One priest, a dignitary of the Church, who was then partial to Mr. Parnell, and in whose parish Mr. Parnell had property, told me he dare not lift his hat to Mr. Parnell if he met him on the road, for if he did he would be reported to the cardinal by some of his spies, and at once degraded.

With such a man there was little hope of even the commonest justice. I did not know then, but I knew it very soon after, that the Kenmare sisters had me watched; though from the hour in which I left the convent they had no right, even according to the laws of the Catholic Church, to interfere in any way whatsoever with me. But what did this matter, when they were determined to do me malicious injury? I had scarcely taken shelter with Mr. M—— ere they sent a telegram to him to try and drive me out even from that refuge. The superioress of Kenmare, the same sister who had been so cruel to me without a cause in Newry, now without a cause did me all the harm she could. She actually forged the name of the mother of my secretary to her message, to make it appear genuine, and as if Mrs. Downing desired that her daughter should leave me. It was a most cruel act, but they failed to accomplish their object. Miss Downing knew it was a forgery, for she knew her

mother had no liking for the sisters, who, as I have said, had acted very unjustly towards her children, because they had been faithful to me. The superioress (Sister Teresa) thought that Mrs. Downing would never know the use she had made of her name, as she had ordered the reply to be addressed to the convent. Her malicious scheme failed. Nothing would have induced Miss Downing to leave me in my hour of trouble, and Mrs. Downing expressed her indignation that her name should have been forged by any one, even if it was a sister.

I knew now that there was only one resource for me. It was a painful one. I was obliged to compel the archbishop to receive me back to his diocese. I wrote to him at first, pointing out to him that I could not go anywhere else, according to the law of the Church to which we both belonged. When I found this of little use I wrote to him again, and said plainly that if he did not do me the justice which I asked from him, I would go right off to Rome, and place the whole case before the Pope. This threat was not calculated to improve my position with him, but I had no other resource. My letter had the effect which I had anticipated, and he replied that he "supposed I could go back to Knock if I wished, as I had leave to go there."

At any other time I might have been amused at this remark, for the whole dispute had turned on the accusation of my enemies that I had not leave to go there. Dr. McEvilly must have forgotten himself when he wrote this, but all the same it was the truth, and his admission was valuable to me, as well as was his telegram, which proved that he had sent me to Dublin himself, and the purpose for which he had sent me.

I set out for Knock the day after I received the archbishop's permission to go there, but only to find myself in new troubles and persecutions. From that hour, until I left his diocese, the archbishop treated me as if I had done the evil of which I was so falsely accused, and as if I had "left my convent," instead of being put out of it with such injustice.

Rumours were circulated everywhere, and believed, though they were of the most absurd character.

The sister of one of the Kenmare sisters whom I had helped for years, even clothing and feeding her children, wrote me a most unchristian letter, which I still have, which, little as she thought it, gave me a clue to the source of my trouble. She said she "had been commissioned to hunt me down." But there was another expression in her letter which later on I understood better. It was this: "You are a wicked fool, and have left your sainted order." I thought but little of these words at the time, because the poor woman was as violent as she was illiterate, but she kept her word.

Shortly after I left Kenmare I received a letter from one of her brothers, imploring me to lend him some money, as he was in great distress; and he said he "did not fear to ask me, as I had been for so many years the generous benefactor of his family and relatives."

I returned to Knock just before Christmas in 1881. It was very severe weather, such as rarely happens in Ireland; and in that country, as the people are unaccustomed to extreme cold, there is no preparation to meet it, and the suffering it causes is all the more intense.

We arrived in Ballyhaunis, the nearest station to the

village of Knock, late in the evening. The windows of the railway carriage had been thick with ice, and we had been well-nigh frozen to our seats on the way from Dublin. At Ballyhaunis matters were far worse. The only conveyance we could get was a wretched "inside car," the cushions of which were saturated with icy water. Nor was there any more comfort at Knock. The only place of shelter I could find was in a poor thatched cottage, where, as a great luxury, I got a little bare closet, which just held a bed and a chair, and was lighted by a window only a foot square.

I shall never forget that Christmas. Archdeacon Cavanagh seemed very glad to see me, and I had a warm welcome from all the people, who were full of hope as to what I might do for them. They were all at the Christmas merry-making and rejoicing, as the poor people will do in Ireland, but for me there was not even spiritual consolation.

If ever any one needed the sacraments of the Church, according to Roman Catholic ideas, surely I was the person, but even they were denied to me. I often wonder that the utter absurdity of the way in which I was treated did not suggest itself to my persecutors. A special confessor is always appointed for convents by the bishop of the diocese, but when sisters are travelling they can confess to any priest. I of course proposed to confess to Father Cavanagh, as I could not receive the sacrament on Christmas Day unless I did so. He, to my surprise, refused to hear my confession. He was then very anxious to keep me at Knock, as he thought that my name and influence would increase the number of visitors, from whom he and his friends were reaping a rich harvest.

Hundreds of pounds were pouring in to him every week for masses to be said at the miraculous shrine, for holy water, and for bits of holy mortar ; yet all this did not satisfy his ambition. But he had a shrewd knowledge of his bishop's character, and of the working of ecclesiastical affairs, and as his interests coincided with mine at that moment, he used his knowledge for my advantage. He told me to write to the archbishop and ask him to give him "faculties" to hear my confession. He ought to have done this himself, but he was afraid, and as usual the burden was put on me. His object was to make the archbishop treat me as a sister of his diocese, and so forge another link in the chain for my security. The conduct of the archbishop showed how little he cared about the sacraments. If ever there was a time or a case in which the sacraments were needed, surely this was the one ; but he refused as long as he could, and at last wrote me a violent letter, saying that Father Cavanagh could hear my confession for "this once only," and that I was giving great scandal by remaining at Knock (where he had sent me himself), and the sooner I left it the better ; that I could go to a convent which he named, and which was in his diocese ; or if I preferred I could go to another convent which he named, which was in another diocese.

This was another trick to get rid of me, or rather to make me get rid of myself. If I had gone to one of the convents which he named he would have turned on me, and declared that I had left his diocese, and he would have had nothing further to do with me. Ecclesiastical history is not without records of cases where priests who were anxious to be rid of persons who were distasteful to them, tried to make them

commit themselves to some course which would give an apparent excuse for violence. The case of Joan of Arc will be familiar to the reader. When she could not be brought to execution on any of the charges which were manufactured against her, armour was placed in her cell by the priests, so that she might fall into the snare so diabolically laid for her. But to-day Rome talks of canonising her. Shame is an unknown quantity in the Church of Rome. I was often assured by priests that I would be canonised after my death, but I always replied that I would far rather be left to do my work in peace while I was living.

I am well nigh weary of the record of attempted work and treacherous hindrances, but it is important that all this should be known as a warning, and perhaps as a preventive of future evil.

Before I proceed further with my own narrative, I shall say a word about the Knock apparitions. I am certain that the poor people saw *something*. The question is, what did they see, and how was the effect produced? It was said at the time that magic lanterns had been used. I heard this report while in Knock, and made all the investigation possible, but without any result. I ascertained that a magic lantern had been bought in Dublin, and traced it to a certain point, but could get no further. As for the cures, there were certainly some which were at least partial recoveries; but with all the efforts made to bring forward a cure which could not be disputed, not one could be found. I was at first full of enthusiasm on the subject, but soon found cause to cool down.

While I was in the church one day I saw a bright

light above the altar, and all the people were exclaiming, "There it is! there it is! Now we have seen it for ourselves." I was somewhat impressed myself, and hoped that at last I had seen a supernatural sight, even if it was only a bright light. I was kneeling when I first saw the light, but when I rose up from my knees the light disappeared. I at once knelt down again, and lo, the light shone once more as bright as ever. I tried this experiment several times, and was then convinced that it was some reflection. I had made up my mind to investigate everything thoroughly when I came to Knock, though my prejudices were in favour of believing everything. I now went near the altar, and at once found out the cause of what seemed supernatural. It was simply a very large glass stone, which had caught the reflection of the setting sun.

I dared not touch anything about the shrine, so I went at once to Father Cavanagh, whose house was quite near, and asked him to come and remove the "vision," for I thought it was dreadful to have the people deceived. But to my amazement—and I must admit also to my indignation—he would not remove it. This made me very sceptical as far as he was concerned. Later I had another, and still more serious, reason to doubt the veracity of the cures. A woman came to Knock who said that her son, who was with her, had been born deaf and dumb, and that he had recovered his hearing and speech at the shrine. If this was true, and so far I did not see any reason to doubt it, it certainly would have been a real miracle. But I proceeded to investigate, with the result of finding that the whole business was simply an atrocious fraud. I found out that the boy had

been in the deaf and dumb asylum in Dublin, and wrote there to know what state he had been in when he was an inmate of this institution, which was under Roman Catholic management. The reply was that he had been taken in there to try if his speech could be improved ; that he was not born deaf, nor had he ever been deaf, but that he had some infirmity of speech which was neither better nor worse than it had always been. As Father Cavanagh was allowing this woman to remain at Knock at the expense of the pilgrims, from whom she was getting large sums of money by exhibiting the "miraculously" cured boy, I spoke to him rather too sharply on the subject for my own peace. He was very angry, and said the woman should remain, and that he was sure the boy had been cured there. What can you say to a person who is sure he is right, when every one else knows he is wrong ?

Dr. McEvilly was in a difficult position. I am certain that he never believed in the Knock apparitions, but he had recourse to his usual phrase, which served him in so many difficulties, that "as at present advised" he neither "believed nor disbelieved" them. This was all very well if the responsibility of the case had not rested on him. But he knew that Father Cavanagh had begun to be looked on as a saint, though, according to his own account, he was not the one to see the miraculous appearance. It was first seen by his housekeeper, who used to see very wonderful things on occasions when she was taken home by the police in a state of inebriation. Whatever hold she had on Father Cavanagh no one knew, but he positively refused to part with her. Even the archbishop could not get him to send her away, though

her presence, or rather her actions, were a source of the greatest scandal after the pilgrims began to come in crowds. I offered to pay all her expenses to America to rid the place of her, and to give her any reasonable sum of money, but it was of no avail. Archbishop McEvilly was very unpopular with his people, and Knock and the neighbourhood was a hotbed of Fenianism and secret societies. This was another reason why he did not dare to discourage Knock, whatever may have been his private opinion. The cardinal was also known to be very much opposed to what was doing at Knock, though he never took the trouble to investigate the matter. It is one of the privileges of a Roman Catholic bishop to come to a decision without having investigated the case on which he decides, and to condemn his victims without giving them any reason whatsoever for the condemnation. My own case is a case in point, and I knew of many others.

None of the neighbouring priests believed in the apparitions ; they said they "knew Cavanagh too well." They were also very indignant when they found that no matter what crowd of pilgrims came there, he never asked any of them to come and help him to hear confessions. This they said was because he was too mean to give them lunch, and too much afraid that some of the money for masses which poured in on him would come to them. A considerable stir was made about this matter, but of course it was kept secret. His brother priests declared that he could not possibly have said all the masses which he was paid for saying, and according to the canon law of the Church he should have handed over the money to priests who could have made up for his deficiencies.

But money was just the last thing he was willing to part with. There is a mass bureau in France, which is the resource of priests who get money for more masses than they can say. Some priests there, or religious orders, say mass cheap ; so that a priest who gets, say, five shillings or a pound for saying mass, can get it done there for a franc, and keep the difference. And this is the religion which claims to be infallible, and the only religion wherein men can be saved. Even if it were all that it claims to be, it is certain that those who trust their salvation to it run some very serious risks, above all, when they invest money for the benefit of their souls or of those of their departed friends. It was said by the priests that Father Cavanagh had very easy ideas on the subject of masses, and that he might not even get them said at the discount. I spoke to him on the subject once, with the result of being assured that one mass said by himself would "do" for a great many people ; but even according to the teaching of Rome it would not do if each person had paid to have a mass said for himself.

And all this wretched traffic in souls is going on year in and year out, and there is no man to cry shame.

CHAPTER XV.

THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION.

“Do you know God’s saints are chosen
Oftentimes to suffer sore,
That the crown may be more golden
When the suffering is o’er?” NORRIS.

“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.”
I PETER iv. 14.

I REMAINED at Claremorris, where I had removed with the archbishop’s consent, while I was collecting sufficient funds to commence the building of a convent and industrial school. I boarded with the Sisters of Mercy, and was kindly treated. They were grateful to me for what I had done for them in the famine year, and they were having a hard time of it themselves with the archbishop and the priest of their parish. The convent at Claremorris had been founded by the late Archbishop, Dr. McHale, which was quite sufficient to make Dr. McEvilly bear it illwill. The parish priest, Canon Bourke, did not like sisters in his parish under any circumstances. I heard the archbishop say one day as he was leaving the convent, after a visit, which was a rare occasion, “Thank God I had nothing to do with founding this convent.” Yet the sisters were doing their best for the poor as far as they could, and were at least entitled to his protection. The poor superioress looked at me as he spoke,

as if to say, "You see we also have our troubles," as indeed they had.

I was now very anxious to go to Knock to live and begin my work, and to have some sisters with me, for so far I had only Miss Downing, who often told me she had seen too much of sisters ever to be one. It was very difficult to obtain leave from the archbishop to do anything. I believe he always hoped to tire me out, and get rid of me in some way; but I did not feel inclined to perform a happy despatch for his benefit, and so I persevered. At last he grew weary of my importunities, and he could not deny that a sufficient sum of money had come in to commence work. I had now to find sisters to work with me, and that was no easy matter. There were sisters in Kenmare who would have been only too glad to have come to me, but they would not be allowed. I got messages from several of them who were utterly wearied with the constant quarrelling, and longed for the peace which they were sure, if it was in my power, we should have at Knock. I knew also some of the sisters from Newry would gladly come, but a sister ceases to have even a voice in the most important concern of her life when once she takes a vow of obedience.

Even in matters in which she is supposed to act as a free agent she is tied and helpless. It is made a great boast that the sisters have power to elect their own superior. This is far from being the case. It is true that the liberty of free voting is allowed to them nominally, or rather I should say ostensibly, but there are so many spies and so many to watch every little act in convent life, that it is difficult to conceal anything. I remember one case in point. There was

an election for superioress while I was a novice in Newry. The young professed had a vote, and one of the newly professed, supposing that having a vote meant that she could use it as she pleased, voted for the sister who was then novice mistress, and not for Mrs. O'Hagan. I can never forget the storm of reproach to which she was subjected by Mrs. O'Hagan's partisans, who found out in some way that she had acted as she thought right. Her life was made a burden to her for months. In this way a powerful faction in a convent can secure an apparent unanimity of vote for a sister whom they wish to have elected. The same tactics were practised in Rome when bishops were called there to vote according to their consciences on the question of the Pope's infallibility, but who found that it would be made very unpleasant for them if they did not vote to please the ruling powers.

Bishop Moriarty was my informant on this matter, and he was not the only one. Before he left Ireland for the Council he told me he would not vote for the infallibility of the Pope. When he came back, and I asked him how he could have done so, he said sadly, "My child, you do not know how things were arranged there. We had no liberty; we were obliged to vote as they wished." I thought often since of Cardinal Newman's remark, that they were "an insolent and aggressive faction." There is in every Catholic institution an "insolent and aggressive faction," who rule a timid minority, and a minority which would be a majority if this system of terrorism did not exist.

I tried to get Dr. McEvilly to see that the wiser way would have been to allow me to receive postulants at once, and not to have sisters from other convents. Besides, I was very anxious to have a new rule. The

Irish Poor Clares, as I have said elsewhere, are simply an ecclesiastical anomaly. They are dying out in consequence, and the Sisters of Mercy are flourishing. The rule of the Irish Poor Clares, one would say, is almost arranged to prevent them from being either an active or a contemplative order. They are enclosed, but have what is called episcopal enclosure only; yet they cannot visit the poor or the dying. They are not allowed to say the long office, nor to fast or abstain, except on the days of fasting and abstinence required by the Church, which are now merely nominal; yet they bear the name of one of the most austere Orders in the Roman Catholic Church. As this book is necessarily a little discursive, I may mention here a circumstance which came within my personal knowledge in this connection.

I have spoken already of the regulations in regard to fasting which I found many years since when I entered Newry Convent. The bishop in each diocese has the power to regulate the fasting, etc.; but the bishops now generally make some kind of agreement amongst themselves, to have the same rules at least in places near each other. At this time they were not so particular. The fasting regulations in Newry were then very severe; in the next diocese they were somewhat relaxed. A gentleman in Newry who had a house in each diocese, and a house just on the very dividing line between the two, used to eat meat on the doorstep of his backyard, which was in the relaxed diocese, though his sleeping rooms and the rest of his house was in the severe diocese. It is no wonder that the regular outcome of Roman Catholic teaching is infidelity when religion is thus travestied.

Father Cavanagh was decidedly in favour of making

a change in the Order, or of founding a new Order. He saw at once that the work which I wanted to carry out could not be done effectually under the rules of the so-called Poor Clares. Every one, in fact, approved the design except those who had no right to interfere with it.

When the sisters in Kenmare heard of my plans, and that they were likely to succeed, they were in a terrible state of vexation, and set themselves to work anew to hinder me in every way possible. It was very absurd, to use the mildest term, for what I did in Knock could not have affected them in any way. But they knew very well that their rule was a compromise, and not even in the least like what it professed to be. It is true that it had been sanctioned by the Pope ; but Popes are ready to make any changes which do not infringe on the rights of the Church, if those who desire change have money to expend in attaining what they desire.

I had two reasons for wishing a change in the rules. One was to facilitate the work in which I had my heart set, notwithstanding all the hindrances which I had to meet in its accomplishment. The other reason was that I hoped to effect a change in the spirit and tone of the sisters' life, and thought that by calling our Order the Sister of Peace, we might be reminded that we should aim especially to promote peace amongst ourselves. My first duty was to ask the approbation of the archbishop. He did not seem altogether averse to the idea. He had always liked my plans for the poor. But, as usual, there were many considerations personal to himself which made him hesitate. He knew that I was in bad repute with the cardinal. He was afraid to act one way or another in regard to Knock, and so

all the best interests of the poor and of the sisters were to be sacrificed to the personal ambition of a bishop. This is the usual course of things in the "holy" Catholic Church. Human interests and human ambitions govern everything.

Dr. McEvilly refused in his usual non-committal style; as "at present advised," he would neither say yes nor no. It was a very convenient arrangement for him, but for a woman burning with zeal for the poor, and heartbroken at seeing daily their utter misery, this putting off to the Greek kalends was simply exasperating, and I am afraid I said so. But never a word would he say, but "Perhaps yes, perhaps no." If he had only said, "I will never allow a change," or, "I will allow it at a certain time," I should have known what to do. And this state of indecision was a triumph to those who were on the watch to take advantage of anything which might tell against me.

I hoped now for a time of peace; but this was not to be. It only shows what the Catholic Church is when a sister, who never did any injury to any one, and whose only object was the benefit of the poor, could be thus persecuted; and who cared for the poor? They are the last consideration of an Irish bishop or priest, with rare exceptions. Surely my own case is a sufficient proof of this. I had scarcely been settled in Claremorris Convent, hoping to carry on my work quietly, ere I received a letter from the Archbishop of Cashel, the world-famed Dr. Croke, saying that a "bishop" had written to him that my "leaving Kenmare had been a mere escapade, made without the leave or knowledge of any superior." I had a great mind to write, and tell him to ask the bishop if he thought I had run away with my con-

fessor. Fortunately for me, my secretary had travelled with me, and never left me day or night, so that lie could not be manufactured.

But how absurd all these accusations were in the face of facts which had been so long before the public and what was the object of it? How unworthy it was of men professing to be devoted to the interests of the poor to try and hinder the work of one who, but for their ceaseless persecution, could have done such a glorious and abiding work for Ireland!

It seemed to me that there were quite a number of people who felt they had a mission to do all they could to hinder my plans. If I had, as a secular, opened an hotel at Knock, or a liquor saloon in Dublin, or a gambling-house on the corner of the square where Cardinal McCabe lived, I might have gone on in the even tenor of my way. But as I wished to do a work for the benefit of humanity and the Catholic Church, it changed everything.

Of course, I was not told the name of the bishop who was my accuser, and, but that Dr. Croke had motives of his own for interesting himself in the matter, he would not have taken any trouble about it.

But this bishop, I learned afterwards, was incited by the ever-restless Kenmare sisters, who, so long as I was quiet and at rest, could not cease their unchristian persecutions. Besides, the bishop in question, who was assistant to the Cardinal of Dublin, had a hatred to me, because he supposed that I favoured the Land League party. Certainly, I thought at one time that Home Rule for Ireland was all that was needed to secure peace and prosperity. But Home Rule, with the Pope as president, which would be the practical outcome, is scarcely what will help a country

already distracted through the folly or cupidity of Rome. I suspect that the Peter's Pence, which would be remorselessly exacted if the Pope had the government of Ireland altogether in his hands, would far exceed the demands of the most grasping landlord. The landlord might be kept waiting for his rent, but most assuredly the Pope would not wait for his tithe.

The poor in Dublin were in a most wretched state at this time; but when some Protestant ladies tried to relieve them they were denounced, and the people were forbidden to receive help from them. The poor children, despite priest and sisters, were graduating for the gaols and reformatories, but when I offered to take them to Knock at my own expense, and train them for service at home or in America, it would not be allowed. Better for them to remain drunken and miserable, than to be sober and industrious, because sober and industrious people are apt to think. Indeed, the only thing in which I found there was anything like unanimity, was in denunciations of my work. To have Ireland happy and prosperous did not suit any party. I received a letter from a prominent dynamiter, who over his own signature warned me that I had better give up all thoughts of industrial work in Ireland until it was "settled." For once the cardinal and the dynamiters were of one mind. I was written to by some ladies in Dublin, to say that the Land League, while giving very liberally to the families of men who had been hanged or imprisoned for crime, refused even a penny to the families of the poor men who expressed repentance when dying on the scaffold, and acknowledged the justice of their sentence. My help was implored for them, which I sent promptly

and abundantly. It seemed to me so cruel and inconsistent to make such exceptions.

But to return to the anonymous bishop. It was in vain that Dr. Croke sent him the documents which proved that I had all the permission necessary. When did a Roman Catholic bishop ever acknowledge that he was in the wrong? Dr. Croke then waited till there was a meeting of the bishops in Dublin, after which he wrote to me that he had compelled Bishop Higgins to say before this bishop that there was not one word of truth in all these charges. Yet to the present day they have continued to be made whenever it suits the purpose of an ecclesiastic.

This bishop never had the grace or common Christian charity to apologise to me for all the injury he had done me, or to retract in any way.

Of course Father Angus chimed in too with his little pipe, and had his say. I had published a pamphlet, in which I gave an extract from a speech made by an American gentleman, in which he used the expression that the "English government was the most infernal on the face of the earth," or some such words. The fact was that I had not noticed the words. I had a very busy life. Letters were pouring in on me from all quarters, and I had at least to dictate replies; besides, my health was greatly broken down by the incessant and uncalled-for persecutions to which I was subject. It was in vain that I stated the simple truth—that I had not noticed the words, and was not responsible for them, and that they should be withdrawn. This poor priest ought to have rejoiced that I was doing the only work in the least likely to help in the pacification of a Catholic country; but this seems to have been the last thing which any one

cared for. I was at last obliged to appeal to Cardinal Manning, who was his ecclesiastical superior. But it was scarcely to be expected that a man who could make, and persist, in false charges against a sister with whose affairs he had nothing to do would obey his own bishop. I obtained a partial cessation of his persecution after I had placed the matter in the hands of Protestant solicitors, though even this was of little avail. I need scarcely say that it is altogether forbidden by the Catholic Church to take any public notice of what is done by a priest. It is in this way that the Church keeps all her evils concealed; but I was always a little too independent. The following letter will explain itself:—

“22, FINSBURY CIRCUS, E.C.,

“November 24th, 1883.

“TO MESSRS. FRY & SONS, SOLICITORS, DUBLIN.

“GENTLEMEN,—The cardinal has given me your letter, and in reply thereto, I beg to say that I have seen Father Angus on several occasions, and spoken most seriously about his communications to the newspapers. He, on each occasion, promised me they should cease. By this post, at the request of his Eminence, I am communicating with him, and I trust this will have the desired effect, and prove satisfactory to Sister Mary Francis Clare and yourselves.

“I am, gentlemen,

“Yours very truly,

(Signed) “DANIEL (CANON) GILBERT,

“*Vicar-General.*”

I need scarcely say that there are good men in the Catholic Church, and men who grieve over all the evil which is in her, but they dare not lift their voices. I

know that Dr. Croke sympathised with me in my difficulties, and I have many letters from him to that effect. With the following I close this part of the subject.

In a letter dated October 1st, 1882, Archbishop Croke wrote to me "to publish a short account of your departure from Kenmare Convent, showing clearly, as you can do by documentary evidence, that you had full leave and license to leave Kenmare and go to Knock, and thence to Newry, and finally to settle in Knock, with a view to the erection there of a convent of your Order. Dr. McCabe had been told that you had no leave to quit Kenmare; this I know. Hence, I suppose, the eviction."

What a country Ireland is! I was "evicted" by Cardinal McCabe because he would not take the trouble to ascertain the truth or falsehood of a serious charge, and because he did not wish to be undeceived, for I was committing the crime of trying to help the poor and save them from eviction.*

* A clergyman who had some personal knowledge of my affairs published the following statement in the *New York Churchman* :—

"Miss Cusack has been abominably treated by the Roman bishops of Ireland and by Dr. Corrigan, the Tridentine Archbishop in New York, as well as by their infinite concourse of sacerdotal satellites. In order to crush her they have stooped to the basest and crudest means, and have not scrupled to resort to slander, calumny, embezzlement, even forgery, in order to get her property into their own hands, and, at the same time, to oust her from her convent. Her statements, we are in a position to show, can be borne out by the testimony of many in the Roman Church. Every page is an exhibit of the pettiness, meanness, jealousy, and vindictive spite that rule in the breast of the Romish hierarchy. She is a woman of great ability and of no little learning, and these qualities alone marked her down as a something to be kept in the background, and, if possible, to be crushed out of existence as an individual. By her pen she has made her name famous, and some of her works, notably her 'Life of St. Patrick,' and her

I publish the following letters here, not so much for my own justification, as to show what Romanists thought of me before I left their Church, and it is important that Protestants should be fully informed on this subject :—

“THE PALACE, THURLES, *February 20th, 1882.*

“MY DEAR SISTER M. FRANCIS CLARE,—I have been thinking of writing to you ever since you left Kenmare, to bid you God-speed on the lines of the new departure, which, with the blessing and full concurrence of your friends and spiritual superiors, you have so bravely, and, as I trust, so advantageously entered on.

“But as you have been recalled to my memory in a special manner this morning, by the receipt of your ‘Cloister Songs,’ I do not see that I can with any decency defer writing to you any longer, if only to thank you for this last, though not the least, token of your goodwill towards myself personally, as well as of your unabated energy in the sacred cause of sound religious and historic literature.

“It is, indeed, quite a puzzle to me, as it must be to thousands of your readers likewise, how you have managed to compose so many weighty and valuable works on such a variety of subjects as you have dealt with, some of them being unusually abstruse and even complicated ; and especially how you succeeded in doing so, without having laid yourself open to any

histories of the counties of Cork and Kerry—most valuable from a naturalist’s and a geologist’s standpoint—will live as monuments of her industry and her accuracy of research. We trust that Miss Cusack, being now freed from the shackles of her late bondage, will see her way to some sphere of labour that shall be more beneficial to herself and helpful to the cause of ‘pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father.’ ”

serious charge of inaccuracy in historic, or of grave error in theological matters. The more so, indeed, as you have been always understood to have been most faithful, and even assiduous, in the discharge of the substantial duties of your sacred calling, besides attending to the supply and distribution of the large funds, which, owing to your great popularity, were from time to time committed to you for charitable purposes by your admirers, both in the Old and the New World.

“As a matter of course, and, indeed, as might have been anticipated, so prominent a religious, so voluminous and varied a writer, and so pronounced a Hibernian as you are known to be, could not have always escaped the sharp and even unfriendly criticism of literary or political purists, to say nothing whatever of the sneers and snarling of such men as that Saxon cleric appears to be who so bitterly assailed you the other day in the pages of the *Weekly Register*.

“But you may abundantly console yourself with the thought that your countrymen at large, and your countrywomen also, whether at home or in exile, appreciate to the full your great and disinterested labours in the cause of creed and country, and that the name of the good and gifted ‘NUN OF KENMARE’ will continue to be what it is to-day, a real household word, to be cherished as such amongst the genuine lovers of our country for many generations yet to come.

“Wishing you health, happiness, and success, I remain, my dear Sister M. Francis Clare,

“Your very faithful friend,

“T. W. CROKE, *Archbishop of Cashel*.

“TO SISTER MARY FRANCIS CLARE,

“*Knock, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo.*”

I sent Father Cavanagh, March 4th, 1882, the letter from Dr. Croke in which he so emphatically declared that I had not left Kenmare without permission, and he replied :—

“ You ought to act on Dr. Croke’s advice to publish the letters of Bishop Higgins and your confessor, which prove how utterly and maliciously false this bishop’s reports were, for Archbishop Croke is surely a great and sincere friend. Both from his exalted position in the Church, and his great learning and ability, he is held in the greatest esteem by his countrymen all over the world. Circulate his very memorable letter to you everywhere, at home and abroad.

“ As to what an unknown bishop says of an ‘ escape,’ I do not see how he can conscientiously use such a term ; I will not say a word about the utter inapplicability of such a term ; but it is unjust and unmerited. It is very strange phraseology under such circumstances, and I regret that any bishop should have made use of such language.”

I give another extract from a letter of Archbishop Cavanagh’s, to show how interested he appeared to be in my work. Knowing from the reports of the physicians that I was threatened with heart trouble, he wrote to me on February 3rd, 1882 : “ You ought to take special care of your health, and be very cautious when going up or downstairs to walk slowly.” At that time I was not forbidden by the doctors to go up or downstairs, as I have been since. I could give many other extracts from his letters, but these will suffice. His natural kindness of heart seemed to have altogether forsaken him when brought under the evil influence of his friends at Knock.

“The documents which you have sent Archbishop Croke ought to satisfy this bishop and any unprejudiced mind that your coming here was in perfect accordance with what the Church requires. You had the approbation of your religious superior, the sanction of the acting bishop of your diocese, with the full concurrence both of His Grace the Archbishop of Tuam and myself, as both of us had written to you at Kenmare, testifying that they were well aware of your coming here, and arranging with you about establishing and founding a convent here. These facts have appeared before the world long since, and I do not see the use of saying any more about them.”

On this subject I quite agreed with Archdeacon Cavanagh, but what could I do when these charges were, and are, repeated again and again to this very day ?

But the most important of many letters which I received was one addressed to me by Pope Pius IX. I believe I am the only woman who was ever paid so high a compliment by a Pope.

“To our beloved daughter in Christ, MARY FRANCIS CLARE, of the Sisters of Saint Clare, PIUS P.P. IX.

“BELOVED DAUGHTER IN CHRIST,—Health and apostolic benediction. We congratulate you, beloved daughter in Christ, on having completed a long and difficult work which seemed to be above woman’s strength, with a success that has justly earned the applause of the wise and the learned. We rejoice not only that you have promoted by this eloquent and learned volume the glory of the illustrious Apostle of Ireland, St Patrick, but also because you have deserved well of the whole Church ; for in recording the actions

of so great a man, you have placed before the eyes of the world the benefits received through the Catholic religion so clearly, that they can no longer be questioned. We certainly augur this successful issue from your labour ; and at the same time we impart to you and to your sisters, most lovingly, the apostolic benediction, as an earnest of God's favour and a pledge of our goodwill.

“ Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, the 6th October, 1870, the twenty-fifth year of our pontificate.

“ PIUS P.P. IX.”

CHAPTER XVI.

LIFE AT KNOCK—VISIONS AND FICTITIOUS MIRACLES.

“Bear up, bear on, the end shall tell ;
The dear Lord ordereth all things well.”

J. G. WHITTIER.

“For the mystery of iniquity doth already work.”—2 THESS. ii. 7.

“God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.”—2 THESS. ii. 11.

I HAD at last obtained the permission of the archbishop to live in Knock, to begin to build a convent, and to get, if I could, a sister to join me in the work ; but I could easily have got young ladies to enter as postulants. All the religious Orders in the Roman Catholic Church began in this way, by several ladies agreeing to live together, and eventually to receive the religious habit. But in my case anything so simple would not be allowed, for it seemed to be the object of every one concerned to put all the hindrances possible in my way, and if hindrances did not exist to make them. I have appended at the conclusion of another work some extracts from the lives of the founders of religious Orders in the Roman Catholic Church, and they would be good reading for any one, Catholic or Protestant, who supposes that convents are a paradise built up in the Church and carefully cherished.

Every one of those who have tried to do good for humanity in the Church of Rome have been bitterly persecuted during their lives, though, in most instances, they have been canonised after they died. If ever there was a Church which deserved the reproach of whitewashing the sepulchres of the prophets, whom they stoned while living, that Church is the Church of Rome. It is pathetic to read the life trials of these poor women, and to note how they avoid blaming the priests and bishops who ill-treated them, always saying that it was the "devil" who put obstacles in their way. The devils were very human, anyhow. I have already related the reasons why I found so much difficulty in getting a sister to help me. Many sisters loved me dearly, and love me still. One young sister was sent away from Kenmare, happily for herself, though she did not know it, because she fretted so much after I left. I got a sister at last, but it was another evidence of convent treachery. I went to Cavan, where there was a small convent of Poor Clares, and there I was offered a lay sister, whom to my sorrow I took. Her manner and appearance were in her favour, and no one had the kindness to give me even a hint as to her real character, until it was too late to be of any use to me. I found out then that they had given her to me to get rid of her, she was such a nuisance ; and that she had come to me because she thought she would have more liberty to act as she pleased.

The bishop even did not give me a hint about her. When I asked him to give me permission in writing to take her to Knock, so anxious was I to do everything regularly, he only laughed, and said that was some of "Higgins' nonsense," that he never gave such

leaves in writing, and that it was quite unnecessary. I found afterwards that he was right, and that it was only when sisters wanted to give me trouble that they made so much talk on such matters.

I had already secured a house in Knock. It was the only one available, and I was made to pay accordingly. Knock is a little village (far poorer even than Kénmare), where there was only one house ; all the rest of the habitations were mud cabins, of the very poorest quality. The people who owned this house were in abject poverty, and were on the point of eviction. They might have done well and been prosperous but for their affection for the Irishman's curse, and for the extortions which they practised on pilgrims. When the news of the apparitions was first noised abroad, people came from England and America, who could afford to pay, and pay exorbitantly, for decent shelter ; and they were made to pay, and yet the enterprise did not prosper.

I had to give an extortionate rent for this house, and I did not agree to do that until I became so ill that I could no longer live in the stables attached to the house, which was the only place I could get when I went to Knock first. My eyes were first opened to Father Cavanagh's real character when I found that he preferred the interests of these people to that of the sisters, and that he helped them in every way to impose on me. I had eventually to pay a heavy sum in advance to save these people from eviction, and I had to allow them to keep on the bar which they had opened for the benefit of the pilgrims, from which they were realising a very considerable revenue.

The priest in the next parish to Knock was a Canon Bourke. He was very well known through Ireland

as a man of considerable learning, and a great Celtic scholar. He was quite above all the pettiness of those around him, and he was the only protector I had ; but in consequence of his honesty he was not much in favour with either the archbishop or Father Cavanagh. When I found the conduct of these young men absolutely intolerable, and that they were almost encouraged by Father Cavanagh, I sent for him. He went at once to their father, and told him he would raise the country against them if they continued to annoy me. The result was that they left the room, and it was occupied again, as had been agreed, by the servant and Mrs. Kelly. I have reason to believe that the annoyance was deliberate. These people feared I would eventually have a home for pilgrims, and that their gains would thereby be lessened ; indeed, Mrs. Kelly came to me one day and told me plainly that they would drive me out, and set the archbishop against me, and that they did not want strangers. So is Ireland ever blinded to her best interests. I could, and would, have done far more for them than they could have lost, even if I had taken up the charge of the pilgrims.

I had also another and a very serious cause of trouble. Father Cavanagh had a niece living with him, and this girl was like a wild colt untamed, capable of much good or much evil. Unfortunately, everything around the poor girl was against her. Even the sisters in Claremorris asked me to try and induce Father Cavanagh to send her to school, but it was of no use ; she had been sent somewhere, and had refused to remain. She was very much annoyed with me because I would not allow her to run in and out of the convent just as she liked ; and she told me one

day she "would make me pay for it." Thus, even the very rules of the so-called religious life were set at defiance, and yet I was held accountable for their observance. A priest whom I paid very liberally to say mass every morning proved another source of difficulty. It is the custom, and a very absurd one, for the superioress of the convent to sit with the priest who has said mass while he is getting his breakfast. This I declined to do, as I had neither health nor time. Of course I saw that he had everything he could wish for, and that he was treated with every respect, and I went to him sometimes. But he wanted all the attendance he could get, and never forgave me for what he considered a slight. He also wanted to spend time talking with the young sisters who had now joined us, and who were fully occupied with the school which I had at last established. This school, too, became another source of trouble.

In the meantime money was pouring in rapidly, and in very large sums. The American people, and others, even in Ireland, fully appreciated the work which I proposed to do. The wretchedness in Mayo was appalling. The men literally lived for the rest of the year on the payment which they received for a few weeks' harvesting in England. It was a sight to see them going off in groups in the autumn, and returning in the early winter ; yet they owned little plots of land, which might have been made in some degree remunerative. The women and girls were absolutely half naked, and had no occupation whatsoever. All this I proposed to remedy, and could have remedied to some degree. It might have been supposed that any one with the least regard for the country would have rejoiced in the work, and assisted it in every

way possible. Instead of this the very opposite was the case. Bishop, priest (with one exception), and people united to do everything to drive me out of the place. The following letter, which I received from a prominent New York politician, who interested himself greatly in my plans, will speak for itself. Through his instrumentality I got nearly a thousand pounds in a few weeks. Those who had entrusted me with funds for distribution in 1879 were well pleased with what I did with them, and were all ready to help in a plan which they could not fail to see was the only one likely to avert future famine.

“NO. 20, PARK ROW, NEW YORK, *June 16th*, 1881.

“MY DEAR SISTER,—The noble work you have undertaken in behalf of the poor people of Kerry is well known in the United States, and now that you propose to extend your labours to another locality, where poverty is equally as great, you ought to receive the encouragement of the Irish people and their descendants in this country, without regard to religious opinions.

“Your labours are not confined to sects. As I understand it, you treat all alike ; it being immaterial to you what their religion may be, if they are in want.

“The Irish immigration to this country will not bear comparison as in former years with other nations, and I presume this is owing to the want of means of the peasantry to reach this country. For many years the Irish immigration predominated, but latterly the largest percentage of immigration is from Germany. In this, as well as last year, the Italians have immigrated in large numbers, and if they continue until

the end of the present year as they have since the beginning they will exceed all nationalities.

"While it would gladden your heart to see these people endeavoring to make their way through our streets, with the intention of leaving the city as soon as they find employment elsewhere, you would pity them on account of their scanty household furniture, and the little clothing they bring with them.

"It is very unfortunate that some provision has not been made by European Governments to aid these people to leave the countries where they are eking out a miserable existence. As a matter of political economy, the Government would be benefited.

"You are pursuing the methods which will be exceedingly beneficial to those who are living in a state of ignorance, by teaching them industrial pursuits, and adding to their knowledge by presenting new ideas to them, relative to labour, which no one has undertaken before.

"For instance, the young girls have been taught trades that will be valuable to them should they emigrate. They could find ready employment in the large manufacturing establishments in our metropolitan cities.

"I fear I am tiring you with matters with which you are already acquainted.

"Permit me again to congratulate you upon the good you have already done, and to say that you have my sympathy and prayers to enable you to continue your good work.

"Very truly yours,

"JOHN KELLY.

"SISTER MARY FRANCIS CLARE,
Knock, Ballyhaunis, County Mayo, Ireland."

This kind of special, or, if I may say, common-sense training would, I hoped, have been a great advantage to Irish girls, who are not in the way of finding employment in stores or factories, and who must go into domestic service either in America or in Ireland. In either case, the training would have been equally beneficial and necessary.

There were so many little industries which Irish girls could have practised if they had only been taught and encouraged; and so much could have been done to make their poor homes more comfortable, if they were only taught what to do and how to do it.

I began at Knock by giving employment to about forty girls in knitting stockings; and a London firm very heartily entered into my plans, as indeed did every one except those who had power to prevent me. From this firm I got a supply of fine twine for netting horses' ear-caps and fly-protectors, used for the large dray horses in London during the summer months. This firm kindly paid the expense of the material and of the manufactured articles to and from London. I found some difficulty in this work, as, simple as it was, it required care, and the girls, quite untrained to any kind of employment, were not careful. This carefulness was very hard to teach; still I hoped I should teach them something. The firm was very patient with our failures. The girls were earning a trifle weekly, instead of standing about doing nothing. I tried to make them proud of their little earnings, and soon they began to be so, and to try to do better in order to earn more.

I have somewhat anticipated events in this chapter, but I think it better to complete this part of the history.

I also opened a kindergarten, making it suitable to the place and circumstances. Several of the sisters were admirably fitted for this work. I arranged some special songs and rhymes for them myself. The bright, sweet babies—for some of them were little else—soon found it quite a pleasure, and were more eager to come to us than to play with the pig, or make dirt pies on the roadside. When they had not older sisters to bring them to school, I paid a boy to bring them to and from their poor homes.

I doubt not that some of the American tourists who came to see us will remember what a success this undertaking was, until it was ruthlessly broken up.

Before leaving this subject, I should say also that I have always felt that working girls should have a religious and moral as well as a practical training for domestic service. The girl who has learned to be a good servant is making the best preparation to be a good wife and a good mother. She is learning habits which can only be taught by daily exercise in domestic and moral training. I also wished to teach them—and this teaching can only be given effectively while they are young—that domestic service is not a degradation, and that the woman who does her part best in life is the woman who does best all her domestic duties, whether in the family or in special employment.

There were so many things which I could have done if only I had been allowed to do them. I would have tried to interest the girls in rearing poultry, for which there would have been a ready sale; in having little gardens where they could have raised a few vegetables which would have sold at hand, and would have been a beneficial change from the everlasting

cabbage. I would have taught them the value of honey, and opened up for them many other such little sources of occupation and income. The men could have been employed in various ways in the long winter nights and in the early spring, when their sole occupation was the planting of a few potatoes. Besides this, I had now so much money in hand that I was able to begin to build the convent, and to employ a very large number of men.

But even in this I was thwarted by those who should have made any sacrifice to help. The contractor came to me again and again to complain that the workmen were made deliberately drunk, and that he would be obliged to throw up the contract, as he could not easily get men from a distance. The bar was frequented by these poor creatures ; and though I used to go out on the road and try to induce them to go back, it was of little use, for Mr. Kelly watched and followed the men behind the hedges until he could induce them to return. I now sent for a Protestant solicitor from Dublin to see if anything could be done, but he said the only thing that could be done was for me to leave. This was easy to say, but where was I to go, and now I had quite a little crowd of sisters round me ?

The national schools in Ireland are unfortunately under the control of the priests, who are the managers, except in a very few districts, where there is a Protestant majority. It is supposed that this arrangement is a sort of justice to the Irish people, whereas in fact it is a great injustice. No doubt the priests would make a terrible clamour if any change was made, but when it is remembered that this arrangement gives them increased spiritual control, and that they use

every temporal advantage, not for the good of the people, but for the benefit of the Church, I think it is an injustice to the people.*

There is a conscience clause which is simply set at cool defiance. Sisters are required not to have any emblems of religion exhibited in the schools during the lesson hours. They have full permission to teach what they like and to do what they like during the hours appointed for religious instruction. But they are by no means satisfied with this. If you give Rome an inch be very sure she will not thank you for it. An ell is her right, and she has no scruple whatsoever in taking it, promises to the contrary notwithstanding. The sisters have generally a large press at the end of the schoolroom, where St. Joseph and the Virgin are kept locked up. This is always opened at the religious instruction hour, so that the children may be taught to pray to these saints, praying to God and trusting to Him not being considered sufficient for salvation. But the moment the inspector's back is turned all the emblems and idols are once more exhibited at any time the sisters choose, and as if there were no rule to the contrary. Is it any wonder that Irish children have so little respect for the laws of their country, when they see that those from whom they ought to learn to respect them simply set them at defiance?

Some of the inspectors are Protestants, but very few, and as a general rule they are more subservient to the priests than the Catholics. When I opened

* The subject is one on which I would like to enter here very fully, but space will not allow ; however, I make it the subject of one of my lectures, which can be arranged for by addressing me, care of my publishers, Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster Row, London.

the schools at Knock I put them under the National Board, except, of course, the industrial school, which was a separate department. The place where we had the school was fully two miles from those already established by Father Cavanagh, who, to do him justice, had a great many schools in his parish. Before opening my schools I went to the master of the boys' schools, and to the mistress of the girls' schools, and told them if any of their children came to me, to send me word. I did not want children who were already going to school. I found numbers of children all round me who did not go to school, both big and little, and took them in. When Father Cavanagh and his friends wanted an excuse for quarrelling with me, he charged me with taking children from the other schools, and wrote a most abusive and scurrilous attack on me in the Tuam paper. So false and so cruel was this attack that I would not believe he had written it, until the editor sent me the copy in his well-known handwriting. The editor, who was a liberal Catholic, and whose sister was one of my novices, was very angry at the whole affair. He refused to insert the letter, and only did so when Father Cavanagh threatened to ruin him if he did not do so. It would scarcely be of interest to give the whole of this correspondence, but as the education question is of so much importance I will give a part of it. The following is an extract from Father Cavanagh's letter, which he signed, "An Inhabitant of Knock":—

"It was stated in your paper of these children who frequented the convent schools, that none of them were ever before going to any other school.

This, allow me to say, was untrue, as the two school inspectors, on the occasion of a visit to the convent schools, drove thirty-four pupils, boys, from that school, who were decoyed away by a recruiting sergeant, to whom the nun gave twopence for every child he could induce to go to her school. Thus a great wrong was done to the teachers."

Now I had the registry books of the National Board, which showed that every one of Father Cavanagh's charges were false. I was especially careful not to take children from the other schools, and sent away any that came. I also asked the master and mistress to send up a monitress or monitor from time to time, to see if any of their flock had strayed into our schools; and I gave clothing to both parties, and enabled them to keep many children at school who could not have gone otherwise. Both master and mistress were satisfied and thankful. I heard later that one reason why Father Cavanagh wished to make it so unpleasant for me that I would be obliged to leave, was that he had a niece who was a Sister of Mercy, and for whose entrance into the convent he had paid a large fee. He wished her to come to Knock and take up the work as soon as I had all the buildings completed, as she of course could not have found the funds for the purpose, nor could she have done anything for the poor. I have my doubts whether the Sisters of Mercy would have consented to such an iniquitous fraud; but when the power of the priests is in question sisters have but little resource but to obey. The "recruiting sergeant" was a poor little boy of ten, whom I employed to bring the babies to my kindergarten, as they could not come alone, and their mothers

were far too lazy to bring them. These little ones would not be taken at the other schools. With regard to the boys who were sent away, they were, as a class, too naked and too wild to be taken at the boys' school. The master was utterly incompetent, but he was a favourite of Father Cavanagh's ; and it was in vain that the inspector tried to have him replaced by an efficient person. The interests of the poor children were not considered for a moment. The man was so lame he could not walk. He rode to the school on a donkey, and held rule by means of a very long switch, with which he administered justice or injustice to the boys, who thought it fine fun to dodge his blows. The result was not satisfactory.

There is a rule in the Irish Roman Catholic Church that sisters are not to teach boys over seven. When the bishop found I had grown boys, he, inspired by Father Cavanagh, ordered them to be sent away. It should be observed that the Government regulations are, of course, subservient to those of Rome. How long will people of common-sense tolerate this state of things? The boys were to be left in ignorance for the benefit of the Church. In England there is no such regulation ; but then England is not as yet so completely under the control of the Pope. It is well, however, for the people of England to know what Rome does when she has power, and that the further she is from Gospel light the darker are her deeds.

The boys did not like being sent away. The inspector had brought another inspector and a friend to see my kindergarten and industrial school ; and he was not a little touched at the scene which occurred when they were informed that they must not return to school. The poor boys cried, and would not be com-

forted, and could hardly be induced to leave the room. The following letter was written by the inspector, though for obvious reasons he could not write over his own signature :—

KNOCK SCHOOLS.

“ *To the Editor of the ‘ Tuam Herald.’* ”

“ SIR,—The letter which appeared in your last issue over the vague pseudonym of ‘ An Inhabitant of Knock ’ is a very curious production. The animus of the writer is too plain to be concealed; but apart from mean malice, I regret the writer did not confine himself to a plain statement of facts, and not give to the public a tissue of low lies and flagrant falsehoods. I take the statements of the writer *seriatim* only to *seriatim* contradict them,—

“ As regards his first statement as to ‘ very few parishes in Ireland having more schools,’ this contrasts markedly with the undoubted fact that when Sister Clare opened her school at Knock she had attending it between seventy and one hundred children, who were going to no other school, in this well-appointed parish, which will require a better certificate of efficiency than this nameless writer can give it.

“ All the present schools are, in my opinion, overcrowded. As to their efficiency, in one instance the teacher is not particularly active, being lame and old ; another is in gaol ! Are these evidences of efficiency and sufficiency ?

“ As to the statement of the teachers being zealous, I will only ask the writer to examine and contrast the returns of result fees with those of other adjoining parishes.

“ As to the raid of the two school inspectors who

visited the convent school and drove thirty-four boys away, I have yet to learn upon what occasion this invasion occurred.

"I am aware that one day the present inspector, when consulted by the nun as to the advisability of having certain grown boys at her school, did turn away about a dozen of these boys, who were sent simply because they were too old for an infant school, and when they were evicted they showed visibly their signs of regret and disappointment. From this little incident your correspondent evidently reared up his stupendous superstructure of suppositions, and, in characterising his statement, I must use your correspondent's own words, and say that 'it was untrue.'

"And notwithstanding 'the decoying' which this zealous nun was said to practise, it is, I believe, a fact that there were never a larger number 'made their days' at the ordinary schools than while the nun was there and the convent school flourishing.

"I attribute this, sir, to the energy her bright example gave, and the contrasts brought out in her brief sojourn here.

"And still more strange is the fact that the girls' schools showed no appreciable falling off.

"Thus the statement as to the consequent wrong done to the teachers is a gross fabrication, and an unjust imputation upon a devoted *religieuse* who was absolutely driven from Knock by every species of persecution which ingenuity could invent and malice perpetrate.

"Yours truly,

"AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM."

When it is remembered that this letter was written

by a sincere Roman Catholic, and at some personal risk, I think its value and the comfort it was to me will be appreciated.

In the meantime my health was giving way. When all the trials I had to endure are considered—and not one-half are recorded here—it is a wonder that I lived through them. I had a crowd of young ladies round me, to whom I was supposed to teach the principles of the religious life, one of which is respect for and abject submission to their ecclesiastical superiors. How could I ask them to respect such men? I had this lay sister thwarting my arrangements at every turn, trying to dictate to the sisters, and to provoke quarrels, so that she might report them to Father Cavanagh when she went to confession, or got stolen interviews with the priest who was very liberally paid to say mass.

Immediately after I returned from Cavan with Sister Martha I had a serious illness at Knock, in which my life was despaired of. We were indeed living in "holy poverty." The stables were a wretched wooden structure, partly open to all the winds of heaven; and after the comfort, and I might almost say the luxury, that the Kenmare sisters have, the wonder is, not that I became dangerously ill, but that I lived. This poor lay sister had at least one good qualification; she was an excellent nurse. She had become very much attached to me, and I believe a good deal of the subsequent trouble arose from her jealousy, and because I could not allow her to be first in everything. If she had had a good adviser in Father Cavanagh her life and mine would have been very different.

I can never forget the day I arrived to open the convent in Knock. When we came to the stable

everything was wanting ; even the beds which I had ordered had not arrived. We had no food, and neither the archdeacon nor his niece had thought of providing anything for us. The suffering I endured in consequence was serious. Even the man whom I had left to make some repairs to the stables, in order to make them a little habitable, had neglected his work, and spent his time drinking at a bar which was kept by the people who owned the house which I rented later on.

The illness from which I suffered was tonsilitis and diphtheria. There was an awful storm of wind and rain on the night of my arrival, and it may be imagined how unsuitable a place it was for a delicate person, even if well, much more for one who was dangerously ill. Later we managed to find shelter by pasting thick brown paper all over the gaping planks.

My illness soon became so serious that it was necessary to have a skilled nurse. A telegram was sent to the nursing sisters (Bon Secour). A sister came down, but only to her disappointment and mine. She was accustomed to nurse only the rich, and I was obliged to let her go in a day or two from a place where there was nothing but poverty and discomfort. I also wanted her only at night, and she could have slept all day ; but she would not do this, and insisted that I should call her when I needed her. I had no bell of any kind, and the pain of speaking was so great that I preferred to arise, though I knew it was a dangerous thing to do, rather than call her. I recovered very slowly, and owed much to Sister Martha's good nursing and devoted care.

I had almost despaired of getting leave of Archbishop McEvilly to begin the building of the convent

at Knock. A considerable sum of money had been collected by me with his permission, and by his desire, so that there were now quite sufficient funds in hand. He could not but see that the money was coming in very quickly, and that there would be no deficiency on that point.

I now come to a very important part of this narrative, important to others as well as myself. On May 24th, 1882, I got leave from the archbishop to begin to build; and in order to save trouble for all parties I was to make the contracts with the builders and architect. This permission I got in writing, and I wish it to be specially noted. The money I received was sent principally for the purpose of helping the industrial work which I was anxious to carry out at Knock, and not on account of the apparition that took place there. I mention this particularly, because later on Archdeacon Cavanagh made a claim to these funds. In every case they were confided to myself personally, and for one particular object.

I was, of course, the person who was responsible to the builder and architect for all expenses.

I have long borne in silence all the blame of having left Knock to ruin, of having left Ireland, of being capricious, and of having been guilty of I know not how many crimes. I have kept silence a long time—probably too long; and now that I speak at last I shall speak quite plainly, as it is a case in which I must say all or nothing. Those who have been the cause of my speaking out, or who spread the false reports, must take the consequences.

I had the care of the buildings now going on to completion. I had great difficulty in procuring land, for Lord D——'s agent had found Father Cavanagh

so quarrelsome that he at first refused to allow us to have any building ground. Eventually he agreed to do so. I subjoin a letter which will tell a good deal.

“B——, 16 : 11 : ’82.

“DEAR MADAM,—I enclose you a formal intimation of ——’s consent to grant the lease. However, I explained to him that it would be the nuns that would suffer by refusal, so it is all right again. Mr. —— says that Rev. J. Cavanagh’s name is not to be connected with the lease, which, I daresay, you are not sorry for, as he appears to be very overbearing. I think I shall be in the neighbourhood of Knock next week, and, if so, will run up to see you.

(Signed)

“————”

I have a number of letters from Canon Bourke on the subject of Father Cavanagh’s treatment of myself, and the sisters. In one of these, dated August 7th, 1884, he tells me that Father Cavanagh had quite fallen out with him because he had tried to protect me from the outrages of his friends. A New York gentleman who had been staying for some time in Knock wrote to me :—

“Your solemn declaration on any subject would have no weight with Father Cavanagh in opposition to the words of Sister Martha. When I spoke about Mrs. K——’s sons singing ribald songs, and that I often noticed smoking in the room beside the chapel, he coolly said, ‘They were not in that room,’ which I knew was false. It naturally occurred to me that now, at all events, he had vouchsafed one act of justice to you. But no, Canon Bourke of Claremorris it was who went to Mrs. K—— and got her to remove her

young gentlemen from the place where they were such a nuisance. Your serenity at the impudence and insolence of these people astonished me. Months ago, Canon Bourke wrote to me that he had gone to Archdeacon Cavanagh in your interests, but the archdeacon would not listen to him. Taking all this in connection with Father John's calling you a 'liar,' in presence of the community, it was time for you to fly elsewhere.

"At this time Dr. McEvilly, in whom you placed implicit confidence, showed what he really was.* He was offered a chance to do you justice, and allow you to remain, and he should blame only himself, unless he can blame Cardinal McCabe, if he has obliged you to leave.

"When I visited Dr. McEvilly at Lisdoonvarna, he spoke of you to priests who were in company with him, and to me, in a highly complimentary tone, alluding to your great faith, your great charity, and general ability in business matters. Yet in the very next month he allows you to be assailed in this way and vilified."

In a letter dated December 13th, 1883, the same gentleman alludes to the subject of Father John's conduct towards me. He says, "I pray God the people may succeed with the archbishop in getting rid of Father John."

On the 10th December, 1883, I received the following letter from the same person, and later in this work two letters will be found which were addressed

* Again and again I was reproached by my friends, and by some of his own priests, with confiding too much in Archbishop McEvilly, and assured that I would live to regret it.

by him to Archbishop McEvilly and Archdeacon Cavanagh, expostulating with them for the way in which they were acting towards me. This gentleman's right to interfere was grounded on the fact that he had collected very large sums of money for me.

If I were to give extracts from all the letters of those who visited Knock, and who were eyewitnesses of my difficulties, it would only weary the reader.

A gentleman wrote to me at this time :—

“ I came back from an interview with the archdeacon, and have for the first time realised the appalling difficulties you have met, and the pleasure which your enemies take in traducing you.”

On the 31st December I had a letter from Canon Bourke, in which he said, speaking of a personal friend :—

“ He knows something of what you suffered here. Your name and fame will long be defended by some of us, and after a time, by most people. Mr. — had hoped to have realised more than £1,000 for you in the coming year, but now, of course, he will do nothing. God help the poor ! They have suffered more than you will ; for where can they expect to find such a friend as you were to them ? ”

In January he wrote to me again :—

“ Oh, it is terrible ! It is all a series of scheming by which people are led astray. The lies told of you here will be corrected as far as some of us can do so. I have told some priests and some ladies who inquired

about you here the true version of the case. I also told the Bishop of —, and he was very glad to hear the right story.

“I have heard a good deal more of the insults which these young gentlemen” [the sons of the person from whom we rented the house] “used towards you when they saw or met you on your grounds. My dear reverend mother, there is no use in fighting with silk gloves on with those who tried to trample you to the ground when they had you under their power; it is your business to get back to Knock and to finish it.”

It was easy for good Canon Bourke to say this, but how was I to contend against so many powerful opposers?

According to reports in the public press, agitation has been more active in the west and in Kerry than in any other part of Ireland. If I had been allowed to give employment to these men and their families, a great deal of crime would have been prevented.

CHAPTER XVII.

I AM DRIVEN FROM KNOCK.

“She was known in every cottage ;
And the poor tell, in their tears,
How her presence made them happy,
And her words dispell'd their fears.”

PRITCHETT BIGG.

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.”—HEB. vi. 10.

I WAS now convinced that Father Cavanagh would not be satisfied until I left Knock, and where to go and what to do I could not imagine. I still thought, if I could remove the false impressions from the mind of Cardinal McCabe which had been made on him by the Kenmare sisters, that I might yet have some peace. Of course the fact that he was opposed to me was almost as fatal to my success as if I had been excommunicated by the Pope. I still thought, if I showed him all the official papers which I had in my possession, that he would be convinced that he had done me a wrong ; and though a Catholic bishop is not expected to acknowledge any mistake, still he could have set matters right in many ways, without even admitting that he had been mistaken. I was obliged to go to Dublin to see a doctor there, Dr. McVeagh, and he told me my life was not worth six months' purchase if the persecution from which I was suffering was continued. He wrote to Dr. McEvilly an in-

dignant letter, which was certainly a brave act on his part, and told him that the inhuman way in which I was treated would speedily end my life. But Dr. McEvilly had not even the courtesy to reply.

I now wrote to Cardinal McCabe asking him would he appoint a time to see me. I received a most contemptuous and rude reply, in which he blamed me for not stopping in the convent of Harold's Cross. I thought he knew how he had put me out of it a few months before. I wrote to him again, trying to conciliate him, and telling him my object in wishing to see him. He replied, curtly, that he would see me, but only on this condition, that I should get a letter from Archbishop McEvilly asking him to do so.

I was overjoyed at even this concession. I was always so sanguine that things would come right if these bishops would only look into them for themselves, and not judge from idle rumours. And now I thought I had nothing to do but to get the letter. I wrote at once to Archbishop McEvilly, and I sent Archbishop McEvilly's permission for me to visit Dublin to Cardinal McCabe. Happily, however, I kept a copy, as he refused to return me the original document, though I wrote for it more than once.

Instead of the letter, from which I hoped so much, I received a dispatch from Archbishop McEvilly, which is before me now, in these words :—

“For best reasons, determined long since to give no person whomsoever introductory letters to personage in question ; sorry to refuse.”

The simple object throughout my religious career appears to have been for my accusers not to inquire themselves, nor to allow any one to inquire into the

justice of their accusations. And if there was the least chance of documents or statements being brought before them which would justify me, they refused to see them.

It was now quite clear to me that my persecutions would end only with my life. The cardinal was afraid to face me, for he knew well that I had justice on my side, and Dr. McEvilly did not want to do anything that would throw light on the way he had acted towards me.

I have said before that sisters who have founded religious Orders are persecuted while they live, and every possible hindrance is put in their way. I append a letter which I received from the late Archbishop of Toronto, a man well known and very prominent in the Romish Church in Canada. He visited Knock, and was greatly interested in the work which I proposed to do, and helped it substantially. I am particular in giving this letter, and I have others of a similar character, because both Catholics and Protestants ought to know how Rome persecutes those of whom she expresses so much admiration when it suits her purpose. One would suppose, as I have said before, if the Church is both holy and infallible, that it would be able to discern the sanctity of a person while living instead of waiting until she was dead.

“Before you left Knock I heard of the opposition you received, and I wrote very strong letters to Canon Bourke that he might show them to Father Cavanagh. I fear that his views are too restricted. I lately read the life of the foundress of a religious Order in Belgium, who had to leave her first foundation, Amiens, and take refuge in Namur, in Belgium. However, the

Bishop of Amiens afterwards recognised her goodness, and made ample apology. We have another example in St. Hyacinthe, the foundress of the Precious Blood, who was set aside by the bishop of the diocese, through an over-restricted zeal. Your case is not singular, and God will bring things to a good issue in the end. Wishing you every happiness in your new abode, and every blessing to yourself and community, I remain, dear Mother M. F. Clare,

“Faithfully yours in Christ,

“JOHN JOSEPH LYNCH,

“*Archbishop of Toronto.*”

I append here a few more evidences of the ruth and ruin inflicted on a helpless people by those who profess to be their only infallible guides. These documents will also show that I was not the one who deserted Ireland. In order to screen themselves, it was given out, by those who made it impossible for me to remain in Knock, that I preferred to live in England, and that I had deliberately, and from a mere freak, given up the work on which, they knew better than any one else, my whole heart was set. I also add one or two of the letters of the sisters who had joined me at Knock, and who knew but too well all that I suffered,—I might rather say all that we suffered, for their hearts were in the work quite as much as mine was, and I could have done little indeed without their willing and earnest co-operation.

A gentleman writing to me from New York, after he had received information from Canon Bourke of the way in which I had been treated, April 21st, 1884, says :—

“You never told me the language Father John used

to you, or how he tortured you. I know it now. It seems to me as if you had been shielding rather than accusing your persecutors, who, on their part, as I have now good reason to think, resolved at all hazards to crush and banish you."

In a letter from the same gentleman, dated December 10th, 1883, he begins thus :—

"So they have done it at last! Their conduct is certainly outrageous and unpardonable. No doubt they were resolved on pursuing a desperate game, and were determined, anyhow, not to permit you to enter the new convent. I can only say that it was well you did not die, extremely fortunate for Father John, and I think the archdeacon has cause to thank God also. As to the Kellys, from all I saw of them, they are not worth alluding to. They could not, and would not, have pursued the course they did to harass you, if they did not see and know that the two priests were vindictively opposed to you, and in fact determined to crush you.

"God help the poor Irish! Exiled without a thought as to what was to become of them in the land of their exile; and the very priests who were the most energetic in denouncing the landlords who exiled them, would not allow anything to be done to keep them at home, by providing employment for them."

In another letter, dated October 4th, 1884, Canon Bourke says :—

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—There is no use in fighting with silk gloves on with those who *trampled you to the dust* " (the italics are Canon Bourke's), "when they had it in their power; they regarded you as a fair object

for every outrage, because they saw how much you would submit to without complaint, till at last they took you to be a fool, whom they might treat as they pleased. It is your business to get Knock back, and finish it. You will succeed if your friend Dr. Bagshawe works out the matter. I told you what his eminence the cardinal said."

In a postscript to this letter Canon Bourke says :—

"He (Archbishop McEvilly) gave you leave to collect, and threatened to censure me for giving you some help, as you will remember."

The allusion to Cardinal Manning was this : Canon Bourke had written to me some time previous, to say he had been in London and had dined with Cardinal Manning, and at the dinner table the cardinal had spoken very warmly of me and of the work I was doing. This letter I have unfortunately lost or mislaid.

In a letter dated December 31st, 1883, he says :—

"Your name and fame will be defended by some of us here, and after a time by most people. When the archbishop met you in Dublin did he offer any fair terms, or was his action such as I had foretold?"

I might multiply letters from priests and laymen who had personal knowledge of the way I was treated, at Knock.

Mr. Richard Kelly, the editor of the *Tuam Herald*, wrote to me :—

"I have heard many persons speak quite indignantly about the course adopted towards you, many lamenting the fate of the hundred little ones whom you gathered

together and who must now relapse into normal ignorance. Poor Ireland! it is ever thus with her, since history first told her sad story of dissensions; more harm done to her by her own than by strangers. But there is a new and wholesome spirit abroad that will burn out of the people that vile spirit born of slaves and bondsmen,—the spirit of deceit and jealousy, of mean-spiritedness and servility. You will yet find assistance and help from persons of all climes and creeds. As to F—— C—— I fully concur in B——’s opinion of his vanity and selfishness. But it would be a monstrous injustice to let his little game succeed, and surely you have some lien on the building to prevent it.”

After I had been in Knock a short time I wrote to Miss Lowery (Sister Teresa) for the thousand pounds which I had left with her when I went to Knock. The result was a terrible outcry, and a refusal to give it up. I appealed to Dr. Croke, and he tried to get me some justice. But Bishop Higgins was very indignant. He wrote to one of the other bishops, who he hoped would take his part, and the bishop sent the letter to me. I give an extract from it here:—

“As the case seems to arise in the province of Munster, Dr. Croke is the proper judge. Let her bring her case before him. Let him not arbitrate (*sic*) pronounce the law upon it, and if I see no clear reason to question his official judgment, I shall submit. But to submit such a question to a tribunal ruled by heretical laws is a treason I shall not be guilty of.”*

* I wish Englishmen understood the way in which Romanists set the laws of the land, wherever they may be, at defiance. I think if matters were looked into in China to-day, that it would be found that the

We are frequently assured that the Roman Catholic Church is loyal to the Queen and Constitution of England. This is true when the Queen and Constitution agree with her decisions ; but let there be even the least conflict between Rome and the laws of any country, and the result has been invariably the same. The laws of Rome must regulate the Romanist. Here there is a plain proof of this. I had not threatened to go to law, but the bishop supposed that I had done so, and he declares that it is a "treason" to submit an affair of justice to a "tribunal ruled by heretical laws." We know that it is considered "treason" by every Government in the world to refuse to obey its laws. Protestants ought surely to know, at this time of the world's history, that Rome considers it a "treason" to her if Romanists obey any laws except those which she sanctions.

But Bishop Higgins, who was a man of many resources, could obey the law of England when it suited his purpose, and in so doing, he was simply carrying out the principles of his Church. Kerry and Mayo were, as is well known, the scene of frequent outrages, because the hapless people were in greater poverty, and therefore reckless of consequences.

A poor boy was shot dead on the scene of an outrage. It was proved that he was there by mere accident, and that he had taken no part whatsoever

Protestant missionaries are being driven out because of the tyrannies of the Romanist propagandists. The protest lately published shows that they charge the Romish missionaries with intolerable conduct. I do not see why the complainants are to be disbelieved simply because they are Chinese. The Roman Catholic Church was obliged to suppress the Jesuits because of their infamous conduct in India. The Roman Catholic Church neither changes her methods nor her doctrine.

in the fray. But what matter? His death gave Bishop Higgins a good opportunity to show his "loyalty" to the Government, and to forge one more link in the chain which binds England and Rome. England would not know that in private he had declared it a treason to submit to her laws. The poor boy's friends were made the victims of episcopal policy, and had to bear the mortification of being refused Christian burial for their only son ; and only an Irish Catholic could understand the disgrace and shame which such a refusal cast on them.

Further, it should be remarked that Bishop Higgins expresses his willingness to submit to the archbishop's decision, if he finds that this decision is in his favour. If it is not, he will have none of it.

The case was decided, as usual, where I was concerned. I had to take what I could get, and be thankful. I got the money for masses at last, which had been kept from me so long. It was another of many evidences from which I have seen the difference between Roman Catholic teaching and Roman Catholic practice. I had to allow the sisters to take what they pleased ; I had to pay them £200 to be allowed the sale of my own books. But I would have borne more than this for peace.

Roman Catholics are denounced or excommunicated if they make an appeal to the secular courts for justice, and the unhappy being who refuses submission to an injustice may be very sure of scant shrift at a second appeal. An appeal in the case of a priest is sometimes allowed to the archbishop's council, but such an appeal is a mere farce. The council are men who must either agree with the bishop or take the consequence. They generally agree with him.

I may mention here that among the countless complaints which were made about me, one was that I would not remain for any length of time in any place, and was always wanting to change. Yet I remained in Kenmare for years without moving. During that time, two sisters who had been many years professed left it, and returned to Newry Convent, and there was not one word said against them. Four or five sisters went to Dublin on different occasions, at very great expense, for consultations for their health, though they did not suffer from any such serious illness as mine.

It is quite true that after I left Kenmare I moved frequently, but every move I made was in obedience to ecclesiastical superiors, and I have their written desire for what I did.

While in Knock it will be remembered that I was sent by the archbishop himself to Newry Convent. In Dublin I was put out of Harold's Cross Convent by Cardinal McCabe, and obliged to move again.

Again, by desire of Archbishop McEvilly, I went to Knock. Then he ordered me from there to Claremorris; then he sent me to Cavan on business.

While I was in Knock I was obliged to go to England to give evidence in a trial, as money had been collected in my name under false pretences. This was a matter about which there was no choice, as the Government compelled me to go, yet I did not do so without the archbishop's written permission.

I became so dangerously ill after my return that it was necessary for me to get skilled medical advice. I had to go to Dublin for that purpose, and I have in my possession the archbishop's directions for me to do so.

Finally, I was obliged to leave Knock, and eventually, still with permission, to go to England.

After I had moved with the sisters to England I was obliged to go to Rome ; this was another move certainly, but it was made in obedience to my bishop.

A few months after my return from Rome I went to America, very much against my own will, and only at the positive desire of my bishop.

When the people of Knock saw that the sisters followed me to England, and that the works were stopped, they were in dismay, and did all they could to get us back.

The following letter will give some idea of the wretched state of the district. It was no wonder that Father Cavanagh's parish was a centre of Secret Societies, and the district notorious for outrages :—

“THE PRESBYTERY, CLAREMORRIS,

“*July 2nd, 1883.*

“MY DEAR REVEREND MOTHER,—I know you are at present engaged in collecting for your own convent and lace factory at Knock ; but I know also that the cry of distress was never made to you in vain. You have seen the wretched condition of the evicted tenants of Mr. Burke, and you know that in all Ireland there was not a worse landlord, even though he was a Catholic. You know how this moment they are lying out on the roadside half-starving, and you know also how thankful they would be for any employment. I do not ask for money, nor would I give it to them ; but they ask for employment only, that they may be saved from starvation. I saw a letter from a priest in Kerry, who said God had sent you to our archbishop to save the people in their hour of need, as you did in

Kerry, when the famine was there. I know you will not fail us now.

“I am, dear Reverend Mother,

“Yours very sincerely in Christ,

“JAMES CORBETT, C.C.”

In November 1883 the crisis came which decided my leaving Knock. The Archbishop of Tuam (Dr. McEvilly) was in Dublin, and I was there also under the care of Dr. McVeagh, whose kind interference in my behalf will be remembered. There was also in Dublin at that time a Jesuit, Father Gaffney, who had been very much interested in my work. He had also been to Knock, and saw all the difficulties which I had in carrying on what was so much for the good of the people.* Amongst the other false charges which were made against me, was that I did not keep up “regular observance,” that is, that I allowed the rules of the convent as to silence, etc., etc., to be broken. This was a pure invention. We had several priests to give us what are called “retreats.” All of them had the sanction of the archbishop, and all said the same thing, that they had never visited a convent where there was better “observance.” One of these priests, Father Murphy, wrote to the archbishop to this effect; but what matter when he wished to believe otherwise? I had now got to know that a Roman Catholic bishop believes what he likes, and says what he likes; and as he is *quasi* infallible, you have to believe as he does, facts to the contrary notwithstanding.

* He had given us a retreat a few weeks before; was an eyewitness to the annoyances we received from Mr. K——, whom he saw several times outside our windows in such a state that he advised me to send for the police.

A great deal of this trouble was caused by Sister Martha. She, poor soul, talked morning, noon, and night, and I could only keep the rule of silence by warning the sisters in her presence that they must not talk to her, except on business, or at the usual recreation hour. This infuriated her, and she who was always breaking silence accused every one else of doing it.

She had been so buoyed up with the idea that Father Cavanagh would make her superioress, that she thought she might act as she pleased. The sisters had a perfect dread of her, and it was all I could do to prevent an open rupture.

The archbishop now sent Father Gaffney to me with a document which he required me to sign, and said if I did so I should be cleared of all blame and placed in my proper position in the diocese. I naturally held out my hand for the paper which Father Gaffney had brought with him, but I was promptly told that I was not to see it. "What!" I exclaimed, "am I to sign a document and not to know the contents?" "Well," he replied, "I was told I might read it over to you once, and once only." The fact was that this document was so outrageously unjust that the archbishop was afraid, if I had it and made a copy of the contents, that even the Catholic world would cry shame if it was published. I have a good memory, and I remember but too well the principal points. I was not to be allowed to read it over, or even see it; Father Cavanagh was to witness my signature, and then take it back to Dr. McEvilly. I was so surprised that I did not know what to say. Father Gaffney began to read it for me. I listened to the end, as well as my indignation would allow me, then I asked Father Gaffney, "Do

you advise me to sign this?" He replied promptly, "Certainly not; but I could not refuse to bring it to you when the archbishop asked me."

I remember well the principal points. I was to bind myself to finish the convent at my own expense; and I was to bind myself never to speak to one of the sisters, or go near them, as a mistress of novices was to be provided for them. In fact, my name was to be used to establish an institution, out of which I might be cast adrift on the world at any moment, without warning or excuse, and in which I was to be merely a visitor on sufferance. I heard afterwards that the archbishop was very angry because I refused to sign this document, and of course this was told all over Dublin, and probably all over America, as another evidence of my unwillingness to submit to ecclesiastical authority. I was not without a suspicion where the idea originated. It would have suited the Kenmare sisters very well to come to Knock and have absolute authority there, and avail themselves of all the funds I might collect. I do not say this without reason.

I knew perfectly well also that the sisters who were with me would never submit to such a regulation.

I doubt if any other ecclesiastical authority on earth would have required a sister to put her signature to such a document, and above all when she had not been allowed to read it over quietly.

If the archbishop had held a visitation at the convent and inquired himself into what was supposed to be wrong, it would have been quite another matter. I have copies of a number of letters which I wrote to him, begging him to hold a visitation, but he would not.

I knew well now that the one object of the archbishop and those who were bent on preventing the

great work for poor Ireland which I hoped to accomplish, would leave no means unused to make me leave the convent. If I had had but one kind friend, but one Christian friend, to whom I could have gone for counsel and comfort—but I was utterly alone! If Christian people would only do it there is a great work that could be done for sisters. If only some one of the many tourists who came to Kenmare, and saw me, and gave liberal help to the work which I did in the famine year, had given me a little card, and said, "This is my address; if you are ever in trouble come to me," I would have gone gladly to any one who could have given me a temporary shelter. But this work, if ever done, must be done wisely, and with infinite tact and love, or no good can come of it.

I knew the effort which would be made now to make me commit myself to some course which would prove, to the satisfaction of the bishops at least, that all the evil which had been said of me was true. If only in my misery I had gone to some Protestant, or left the convent, how they would have triumphed! But looking back on the past, I can believe that God Himself supported me and sustained me in all this trouble, so that even Rome might not have one word to say when I at last broke my chains. I wrote to Dr. McEvilly, and implored his permission to go to Cardinal Manning. I hoped he was a just man, and I had known him in past years, and thought that he would find a way for me out of my difficulties. I knew at least that he would not refuse to look at the proofs that I could bring him, to show that I had been absolutely blameless.

I was by no means the first foundress of a new Order who had to move from one diocese to another

before she could find rest for herself and her community, or free and cordial protection in her work. Every one could see that my position was a false one, every one knew it ; and those who wished to do so did not fail to avail themselves of the opposition from which I was suffering. I doubt if on earth there was a more broken-hearted soul than mine. One consolation I had, and that was in the love of the dear sisters, who entirely sympathised with me in all my plans.

I prayed to God for deliverance as I had never prayed, I think, before ; and at last a few harsh lines came from Dr. McEvilly unexpectedly, to say that I might go to England if I wished. My state of health was such as to make it almost the risk of my life to travel ; but my life was not dear to me, though, perhaps, it was to my Master, as He has spared it so long. May it be for His glory ; and if I am to live yet longer, may it be that I shall do for Him some work that will be for the good of souls and of His coming kingdom. I went with a sister to London, the scene of so many of my life's sorrows, and saw Cardinal Manning. I met with the most kind reception from him, and he showed that he was satisfied with the justice of my cause by recommending me to Bishop Bagshawe of Nottingham, from whom I also received a very kind welcome.

I had stopped the building, and paid the architect and contractor in full some time before this ; for I knew that I should never be allowed to accomplish the work for which so many had subscribed, and I felt that I had done all I could to carry out the intentions of those who had entrusted me with so much money for God's poor in Ireland. I give here one of hun-

dreds of letters, which will show that the money was given me not for the Knock apparitions, but for the poor of the poorest part of Ireland. Let the blame be on those who have been the cause of so much ruin and misery. The landlords are blamed, but there is another side to the landlord story, as I, though long blaming the landlords alone, came at last to know too well.

The following letter, which is one of many received by me, will show the object for which money was sent to me to Knock :—

“YASS, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA,

“*February 28th, 1884.*

“DEAR SISTER,—Having noticed in one of our Australian journals your very zealous appeal for ‘funds’ to enable you to erect a ‘knitting factory,’ for the very laudable, noble, and combined objects of rescuing from starvation numbers of the poor children of Mayo, and teaching them how to become respectable and religious members of society, by placing in their own hands the means of earning their own livelihood, I endeavoured to collect a few pounds as per enclosed list, and therewith forward you a bank draft for the sum of twenty pounds for the above object.

“Your name, dear sister, has been associated during the past half-century with many grand and noble objects and works to alleviate the distress and misery under which our unhappy country has laboured, but your present one I believe the noblest and grandest one of all. I trust the Almighty God may spare you to witness the results of your noble efforts, and to further indicate—as has been your wont—the character at home and abroad of the children of our bleeding country.

“The following are the names of the contributors, and the amounts given by each. The names of all the Catholics are marked by a X

“Soliciting your prayers at the shrine of our Immaculate Lady at Knock for all the contributors, and especially for myself, wife, and children,

“I remain, dear sister, your obedient child,

“MICHAEL COEN.

“P.S.—The draft is made out in the name of ‘The Nun of Kenmare.’”

It should be observed that a good deal of the money sent to me at Knock was sent by Protestants anonymously to help the poor of Ireland. How little they could have known the result!

A gentleman who lives near Knock wrote to me March 6th, 1884 :—

“I know you will travel a great deal before you will be insulted as you were at Knock ; you know the devil must have some weapon to undermine good and pious works. It could hardly be expected that such good works would succeed without great obstacles.”

Here again we have another of many instances by which grievous harm is done to the Roman Catholic Church. Roman Catholic ecclesiastics have impressed the people with the very convenient idea that they are not to be blamed, no matter what wrong they may do ; so the “devil” is made the convenient scapegoat. The claim of priests to be thus excused is a serious danger to the Roman Catholic Church. Facts cannot be hidden as they were in earlier ages. People know that certain evils exist, and though they may be silent

for a time, the existence of these evils is not forgotten. An open, honest admission of the evils in the Church would go far to lessen them. It would, at least, save the Church the awful crime of even appearing to approve evil by not condemning it. The following is taken from the *Tuam Herald*. Mr. Rogers had been collecting for me for many years, and was employed by Mr. John Kelly, whose letter to me was given at page 294.

SISTER MARY FRANCIS CLARE AND THE VENERABLE
ARCHDEACON CAVANAGH.

"308, EAST BROADWAY, NEW YORK,

"March 31st, 1884.

"To the Editor of the '*Tuam Herald*.'

"SIR,—I request you will have the goodness and fairness to publish the inclosed copy of a letter I sent to Archdeacon Cavanagh, P.P., Knock. It speaks for itself.

"Yours faithfully,

"JAMES ROGERS."

(Copy.)

"203, EAST BROADWAY, NEW YORK,

"March 21st, 1884.

"VERY REV. AND DEAR SIR,—So mortifying to me is the deplorable treatment to which Rev. Mother M. Francis Clare has been subjected, and the provokingly false reports circulated, evidently to injure her reputation, that I feel myself obliged to communicate with you.

"First, as to the assertion that 'she ran away from Knock, deserting her duties; that she robbed the

convent, taking with her contributions sent solely for Knock, to be controlled by you and not by her.' I most emphatically wish to inform you that all such moneys sent from here were sent to HER as testimony of the esteem and affection in which she is held for her efforts and services in behalf of the Irish poor and oppressed, and in the interest of religion and nationality ; such moneys to be distributed by her in the relief and education of the Irish poor, or otherwise in the interests of religion and charity as she might think fit. If testimony, by most respectable persons in America, in proof of this assertion, by you will be required, I can easily send it. It is sufficient to satisfy the public, and all concerned, except of course her persecutors and calumniators, whom nothing would satisfy except her persecution even to exile, and, as it would seem, at any cost, even at the cost of her life. As to the conspiracy, so determined, so scandalous, and so un-Catholic, which was planned against her, I will here avoid alluding to it in detail, merely remarking as regards its malice against the welfare of Catholicity in Ireland, but more particularly against the poor, despised, oppressed, and exterminated Catholics around Knock, that it might be naturally alleged, by any Irishman or Irishwoman who has preserved the faith of Saint Patrick and Saint Bridget, that its conception was indeed infernal. But I will say in conclusion that unless reparation be made both for the wrongs and the scandalously lying reports perpetrated, a full and true account shall be given to the public, indeed to the world, so that all may be in possession of the truth, and may judge for themselves as to the motives. Merciful God ! How is it that by a sense of duty and justice I find myself compelled to

write such a letter as this, especially to you? I could not, indeed, as a Catholic, trust to my accurate memory, nor to my reason, as regards the shocking doings at Knock while I was there last July to September, were it not that other strangers who happened to be there, including priests, partly learned of these doings also.

"I remain, very rev. and dear sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"JAMES ROGERS.

"VENERABLE ARCHDEACON CAVANAGH, P.P.,

"*Knock, Ireland.*"

When it was actually known that we were going from the place it was of course written about in the papers, and Father Cavanagh soon found every one complaining of what he had done. The following article appeared in the *Tuam Herald*:—

"Sister Mary Clare has left Knock for Great Grimsby, gone from Ireland to England! Owing to circumstances which impelled the course, she was most unwillingly forced to remove the seat of her patriotic and ardent labours to a more congenial sphere. The new convent, nearly complete, is now left as it stood, and the hundred children who daily attended the schools are permitted to relapse into normal ignorance. We all here regret the departure of this good-working and noble woman, who was doing so much to raise us intellectually and materially, but whose efforts are foiled."

I wonder if my readers are as weary of reading as I am of writing all this. I have a duty to God, and above all, to those who have confided their alms to me

so often and so generously. I know that they have a right to be told why I have been unable to carry out a work so necessary for the poor, and for working girls.

It has certainly taken me a very long time to realise, that there was no use in persevering ; but I realised it at last. I have before me now a letter from the editor of one of the most influential religious papers in New York, to whom I showed some documents referred to in this book. He says :—

“I now understand your position as I did not before. Truly, you have had to contend with a lot of scoundrels in the guise of priests and bishops and all the rest of it. It is a very fortunate thing for me that I am not a Catholic. I think if I belonged to a religious Order and had such infernal treatment, I should be an apostle of rebellion or reformation, or something else rather aggressive, in a very short space of time. I don't know much about the laws of your Church, and just how much devilry a sister has got to submit to without a murmur or a protest ; but it does seem to me that on general principles of common-sense, such treatment is from the devil, and cannot borrow any sanctity by presenting itself in an ecclesiastical robe.”

Mr. M. M. Waldron, of Ballyhaunis, was my co-trustee, and I still have the deed of trust of Knock Convent, and also the letter which proves that the ground and permission to build was given to me by the landlord, Lord —, and refused to Father Cavanagh. The following letter will show how sincerely the poor people regretted my leaving, but they are powerless while priests rule the country :—

"BALLYHAUNIS, *March 22nd, 1884.*

"MY DEAR REV. MOTHER,—Father Cavanagh, I understand, is delighted with the imagination that he can take possession, and that he will have no trouble raising the funds to finish the convent.

"I fear these ideas are 'building in the moon.' May the Lord, in His mercy, direct and assist all those who are labouring under the false delusions which are detrimental to our religion to see that such a difference as occurred at Knock could not be amended again at once, particularly when it occurred with or amongst the dignitaries of our once persecuted and down-trodden Church. Our enemies again would be so delighted to have such cases as Knock to throw in our face, but God, I hope, will set all these matters right.

"I am glad you find your mission a success. I hope the business you refer to as getting settled will be Knock.

"Wishing you a safe return and a long life to labour in the interests you have at heart,

"Yours very faithfully,

"MICHAEL M. WALDRON."

I had also a letter from the same gentleman telling me that some of the poor people who found themselves left destitute after the building was stopped waited on Father Cavanagh, and implored him to arrange matters so that I could return. But for all reply he "kicked them out of his room." As soon as the public came to know my reasons for leaving Knock, which I had too long concealed, there was so much indignation that for self-protection Father Cavanagh gave out that I had left because I was tired of the

work there, and changeable. Now I have a letter in my possession from him, in which he wrote to me saying that he would never allow either myself or any of my sisters to return there, and this letter was written after I had received the Pope's approbation for my work. But the Pope's approbation is not always treated with all the respect which Protestants suppose.

CHAPTER XVIII.

COMING TO ENGLAND AND GOING TO ROME.

“Through tears that fell in showers
Glimmered our dear loved home, alas ! no longer ours.”

WORDSWORTH.

“Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars ; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.”—ROM. xi. 3.

I HAVE dwelt at some length on affairs connected with my work at Knock, because I think it is of importance that the people of England should know how the priests rule Ireland. We cannot obtain all the little details of priestly rule in Italy against which the Italian people revolted, but here we have a picture of the way in which priests will crush and hinder, and of their immense power for evil. Their own personal interests, or those of the Church, are the only rule of their lives, and everything must be sacrificed to this end. Even the true interests of the Church are but little considered, or rather, I should say, that what we would consider the true interests of a Christian Church are of no moment to them. All they desire is personal advancement and power. Let us be warned in time. The petty injustices which I suffered—if indeed they can be called petty—are a sample of Roman rule, and if Rome had more power the dungeons of the Inquisition would have been the place where they would have silenced me for ever.

I paid every account in full before I left Knock for

England, and sent Sister Martha back to Cavan with a proper escort. She was full of regrets when she found the end of her scheming to be superior, but it was then too late. She, too, was a victim to priestly selfishness. They had used her as a tool, and when they needed her no longer she was cast aside, and bitter indeed were her denunciations. There was but little money left when all debts were paid, but to that little money Father Cavanagh laid claim, though of course he had no more right to it than the reader. It was not without a long struggle that I could get matters arranged. There is one thing that any one who enters a convent may be assured of: Rome will take everything and give nothing. The "Church" has an insatiable appetite, and of course the priest or the bishop in possession is the "Church" for all practical purposes.

I was very kindly received by the Bishop of Nottingham, Dr. Bagshawe, and soon established a convent in Nottingham, as well as others in his diocese. I shall always be grateful for his kindly help in time of need. But I found little difference in the priests, and little difference in the practices of the Church. There was the same greed for money, and the same unscrupulous methods of getting it, and there was less respect for morality than even in Ireland. I was not long in England without painful experience on this subject, but for obvious reasons this experience cannot be related here. I will only say that if Protestants knew the private character of the great majority of the priests in this country they would be disillusioned. Rome contrives to keep her villainess hidden. Priests can ruin helpless girls, and for all penalty only be removed from one diocese to

another. Priests can live lives of hidden debauchery and no Romanist dares to speak of it, because they are taught that it is a greater crime to speak of the fault of the priest than for the priest to commit the fault. This hiding of evil is at once the strength and the weakness of Rome. If the truth were known there would be a cry from end to end of the land to rid the country of evildoers ; but the cry will yet come. Rome, by her policy of repressing the least word of blame, may keep a fair face before the world, but the end will come. Catholics themselves will at last rise up—as it was in the time of the Reformation—and demand the purification of a Church which will not purify herself.

Catholics speak freely of the evils of their Church in private. They would speak more freely, and in public, if Rome were not supported as she is by Christian people.

From Nottingham I went to Rome by desire of Bishop Bagshawe, and with the best introductions. The purpose of my visit was to obtain permission from the Pope to found a new religious Order, to be called the Sisters of Peace. My object in this was twofold. I hoped the very name would remind the sisters that they were called to practise peace amongst themselves before they could hope to teach it to others, and then to establish a work for the working girl, especially a work for emigrants. Besides, it was quite necessary, if I hoped to do any good, that I should be publicly cleared. This I knew would be done in Rome, for the Pope could not authorise any one to establish a new religious Order who had not lived an exemplary life according to Roman Catholic ideas. I spent four months in Rome before a decision was

made, and it could not have been more favourable than it was. I was authorised to found the Order of Sisters of Peace, and I have the Pope's authorisation. I have also a document which declares that every care was taken to investigate the charges which were made against me by the Kenmare sisters and others, and that they were made without even the least foundation. These charges indeed would appear very absurd in Protestant eyes, who could not understand that it was a deadly sin in the sight of Catholics to have left a convent, even when one was persecuted almost to death in it. But even this I did not do, and I cannot but see that the Providence of God was in this matter ; for I did not leave the convent in Kenmare without the usual ecclesiastical permission. If I had done so, Catholics would have believed that I had been guilty of a crime, whereas now all the facts are before them, and they know that I was not only persecuted while trying to work for them, but that I was also cruelly slandered.

I had kept the difficulty between myself, the archbishop, and Father Cavanagh so quiet that, with the exception of Canon Bourke and one or two priests in the neighbourhood, no one knew the real state of the case ; and of course it was the interest of those who had driven me out of Knock to make it appear that I had left of my own accord and as a mere caprice. All the old stories were carefully got up again and circulated everywhere. It was said that I would not "obey my bishop," that I quarrelled with Father Cavanagh. It did not in the least matter whether these statements were true or false ; they were repeated all the same, and answered the purpose for which they were intended.

Evil, with rare exceptions, seems to triumph in this world. Those who considered themselves authorised "to hunt me down" had now a full opportunity of doing so. I had left Knock and gone to England. I was restless, I was hard to please. I was wandering about the world, I wanted change, and so on through the whole litany of absurdity and untruth. So careful had I been indeed to screen those of whom I had better have spoken openly, that a gentleman, a personal friend, when he heard of it, exclaimed, "My God! why did you never say one word of all this to me? I never even suspected that you were treated so cruelly."

The following extract is from one of the sisters' letters to me at this time:—

"We are so happy to get your dear letters, though they made us sad to think all you were suffering for God; but oh! dearest mother, how abundantly He will reward you for it! Think of that happiness, and it will draw you to Him. Surely the cross could hardly be harder, but as you have often told us, the more we suffer in this world the more glorious will be our crown for all eternity. I wish it were in my power to comfort you. Our own dearest mother, God alone can give you the strength you so much require in this terrible affliction, and we are praying for you day and night before the tabernacle, and praying especially for the recovery of your health.

"I always doubted Father Cavanagh's protestations of friendship since the evening I heard him speak so uncharitably and disrespectfully of you. In fact, dear mother, do not be uneasy about his friendship; it is not worth having, as it is so false.

“Do keep Miss Downing” [my secretary] “as long as you can, for we know how you need her. Do not be anxious about business or letters; Sister M. J. and Sister M. E. are attending to them most carefully. We are trying to keep up regular observance.”

I was received most kindly and cordially in Rome. I had not been there more than a few days when I had the honour of a visit from Cardinal Howard, then a prominent member of the Sacred College, and apparently in perfect health and vigour.* I saw his eminence frequently afterwards, and he expressed his opinion very plainly as to the way I had been treated in Ireland. On one occasion he said, “It seems to me that you have been the Joan of Arc of Ireland; you are trying to help every one. They could not burn you alive, and so they only hunted you out.”

My affairs were placed in the hands of one of the Minutandi in Propaganda, the late Mgr. Gualdi, a priest of high character, and much thought of in Propaganda. He knew English thoroughly, having spent some years in England, and he was entrusted with the management of English and Irish affairs.†

* It is reported that he is now in a lunatic asylum. Was he too liberal for Rome? I know that many bishops, priests, and nuns are in lunatic asylums which are not under public inspection.

† Mgr. Gualdi was the only person whom I met in Rome connected with the Propaganda who could speak English at all fluently. It is strange that English-speaking Catholics do not see the inconsistency of having all their affairs regulated by persons who are ignorant of their language. According to Mr. Stead, Mgr. Gualdi appears to have died of a broken heart after his mission to Ireland. He told the truth about Ireland, and probably about the Irish bishops, and truth is seldom acceptable in Rome, where there are so many conflicting interests.

I was surprised to find how well the characters of the different bishops were known in Rome. My business was to get a dispensation from my vows as a Poor Clare, and the permission to establish the Order of the Sisters of Peace. As I have said before, it was necessary that the Holy Father should be well assured that I was worthy of such a favour before it was granted. All the false reports which had been circulated about me were investigated, and all the originals of documents published in this work were carefully examined.

Mgr. Gualdi told me privately that piles of letters were sent in about me to Propaganda, all of which passed through his hands, and he said there was not one single charge substantiated against me. He said, "We are used to this kind of thing in Rome. Letters full of complaints, rumours, and suggestions, but not one word of fact." I heard some curious and amusing anecdotes about letters and statements which were sent into Propaganda regarding priests who were likely to be appointed bishops, from those who were opposed to them. After all, human nature is everywhere. In my case, at least, "*Roma locuta est*" has had no meaning. Rome has spoken for me in vain. My persecutors never obeyed her voice.

I may mention one incident of my stay in Rome, which will show how absurd was the espionage on my movements, and how anxious certain persons in Ireland were to keep up the disproved charges against me.

I stayed at a private boarding-house near Propaganda, and within a few doors of Mgr. Gualdi's residence, this arrangement having been approved of by him for mutual convenience. I had a sister with

me. I never left my room or joined the guests, although, while I was there, a sister was staying in the same boarding-house, and took her meals with the others, and joined them in the evening. I remained in my room with the sister who travelled with me because I preferred to do so, and partly because I knew how I was watched, and I determined to leave no cause for new reports, unless they should be manufactured as they had been before. I was not able to go out to early mass, and I did not like the sister to go out alone in Rome, although other sisters did so. I therefore proposed to move to a convent where they took boarders, and where the sister could go to mass with the others.

But when I mentioned this to Mgr. Gualdi he would not hear of it. He said, "This will be another removal, and one of the complaints against you is that you are constantly removing. I know that it is not true, and that you have never moved without necessity and permission, but, all the same, we must not let you be talked of in Rome, if possible."

I had many favours granted to me in Rome which I had never expected. I was cordially received in Propaganda, and was given special facilities for the preparation of a paper which I was asked to write for the Paris *Univers* on the Propaganda.

At the Vatican I had the pleasure of seeing Mgr. Macchi frequently, and I had the unusual favour of both a public and a private audience with the Holy Father.

Everything has been said and written which could be said or written, to do away with or minimise the fact, but all in vain. Denial or discredit may gratify a poor feeling of jealousy, but it cannot alter facts.

The official report of my audience with the Pope was published by the London *Times* and other papers.*

The Pope's own organ, *L'Osservatore Romano*, and

*

[From the "*Times*."]

"THE VATICAN, ROME, May 24th.

"The Pope gave a private audience this morning to the Reverend Mother Mary Francis Clare, who has come to Rome to obtain his special benediction for the institution which she has founded, at Nottingham, for the training of girls to domestic service, and the supply of lodgings to those working in factories at a distance from their homes."

[From the "*Standard*."]

"Sunday night, May 25th, 1884.

"The Pope has accorded a private audience to Mother Mary Clare, who came to implore a special benediction for an institution founded by her in the diocese of Nottingham, called the Sisters of Peace of St. Joseph, the object of which is to bring up girls to domestic service, to teach them various callings, to furnish lodgings to those who are employed far from their families, and lastly, to diffuse Catholic literature. The Pope expressed his high approval of the institution."

A Roman correspondent says: "The extracts from the *Journal de Rome* and *L'Osservatore Romano*, authoritative organs of the Vatican, show the very high estimation in which Mother Francis Clare is held by the Holy Father; how greatly he esteems her literary works, and how much interest he feels in 'her career and course of apostolic work.' The Pope has been made acquainted, through some of the Roman cardinals, with the life and labours of the 'celebrated *religieuse*.' The result was the merited compliment recorded by these papers, 'the Holy Father highly praised her zeal and her labours, and accorded to the good *religieuse* his special encouragement and benediction.'

"A higher tribute to any one could not be given, and Mother Francis Clare may rest satisfied that, by those who can appreciate her single-minded work, she has not been unappreciated or under-estimated. The complimentary language of the head of the Church is an honour which it is no exaggeration to say no other woman, religious or otherwise, in Europe would receive from such a quarter. So keen an observer of men, so careful a dispenser of praise and honours, would not have spoken so if he had not felt, by his inquiries and judgment, fully justified in his exalted praise of this distinguished woman."

the *Moniteur de Rome* had also full reports of my audience.

My audience was entirely private, as I did not require an interpreter, and it was a very rare if not an exceptional favour to have such an audience.

Mgr. Macchi brought in a whole set of my books to his holiness, who looked at them, I think somewhat surprised at the number. Some of them were duplicated, having been translated into German, French, and Italian. He could read the titles of these works, and the name of O'Connell was naturally familiar to him, as he noticed it on my "Life of O'Connell," which I brought with my other books.

The Pope specially commended the plan of my new Order, and encouraged me in every way to continue writing. He gave his blessing to all the sisters present and to come, and to all those who would contribute to my work. I cannot forget his paternal and affectionate kindness, and the sympathy he expressed for the troubles I had gone through. My last audience was a public one, and at this the Pope noticed me specially, and spoke to those who were standing around, explaining to them in a few words that we were Sisters of Peace, and the object of our order.

I left Rome with a light heart. It never occurred to me, even for a moment, to suppose that there could be any more opposition. I was sure that those who had circulated false reports would at once cease to do so, no matter what they might feel, as Rome had spoken. I knew also how those who were interested in my work would rejoice, but my hopes were not to be realised.

A circumstance of a very painful character occurred during my four months' stay in Rome. A young lady committed child murder. She had come from Australia

with a young brother, and was a person of large independent property. She was cared for by a sister, belonging to a newly founded Order, which seems to have for its principal work the care of rich Protestants and Catholics who need nurses, and can pay very liberally for them. I was asked to go and see this lady, and I soon perceived that she had some heavy weight on her mind, which I believed was the principal cause of her illness. I little suspected what her trouble was. My first visit to her was my last. She was in the hands of two priests, who watched her turn and turn about, and who rarely left the house day or night. They gave strict orders to the sister who was nursing her that I was not to be allowed to see her again. The sister dared not disobey, and probably Miss D—— was told that I had not called again, as she had requested me to do. So much for the liberty of action allowed by priests when they can exercise all the control which they desire. It is probable that if she had been allowed to see me she would have told me her trouble, and I might have been the means of saving her from the grievous sin which she eventually committed, and of saving the Catholic Church from a very grave suspicion of scandal. The whole story is too horrible to relate here. The murdered babe was at last discovered, and the police were called in, and placed a guard on the poor lady, who died soon after from grief and fright. The two priests were forbidden the house, and I heard that the Pope was justly indignant at the state of affairs, which was reported all over Rome, and made the subject of cartoons in the comic journals. The people of Rome were already sufficiently incensed against priests and sisters, and any addition to the fuel was, to say the least, undesirable.

Yet such is Rome, that one, at least, of these priests was allowed to return there, he having found out the way to secure papal immunity for his crime. He obtained pardon by collecting money to build a new church, though the churches in Rome are as numerous as they are unused.

I returned to England full of hope. I was so sure that the strong approbation of the Pope was all-sufficient, and that fear or respect for his decision would have protected me from all further calumny. I could not have supposed it possible, when it had been officially declared that I had done nothing wrong, that the accusations would be still continued.

But I found later that mine was not the only case in which papal decisions were treated with scant reverence. The Pope is dependent on the bishops for his support, and unless a bishop commits a very flagrant wrong, and, above all, unless the wrong is very public, the Pope generally finds it convenient to pass over matters which he cannot mend.

I had visited several of the most famous shrines of the Roman Catholic Church on my way to Rome and during a short absence from Rome, granted to me while the Propaganda was considering my case. I found these shrines, for the most part, deserted, and the priests driven out by an indignant people, while they are being received in England to undo the work of the Reformation, which cost us so much blood and suffering. At Assisi I found that the Franciscan monks had been driven out, not by Protestants, but by Catholics, wearied of their extortions and quarrels. At Paray le Monial, one of the most famous shrines of the Catholic Church, the Jesuits had been banished by an indignant people; but they may well bear it with

equanimity when they are assisted and encouraged to flourish in Protestant England.

On my return to England Bishop Bagshawe wished me to go to America with a sister and a priest, partly to collect funds, and partly to try and find an opening for an emigrants' home. I was also very much pressed to do this by a person whom I had employed as an agent there for some years.

I sailed from Liverpool with Mother Mary Evangelist and Canon Monaghan in November 1884. Before I left Nottingham a public demonstration was held there, which was very fully reported in the local press. I give some extracts from the speeches then made at the conclusion of this chapter, because they show what was my standing in the Roman Catholic Church.

I can but give a brief history of my experience in America. I found, on arriving there, that my persecutors had preceded me, and that all the absurd calumnies which had been circulated about me were reported there, while no one seemed to have even the slightest respect for the decisions of the Pope and Propaganda. Those who are familiar with the quarrels which took place between the "regulars" and the "seculars" in the Catholic Church at various periods of its history will know what ought to be more generally known, that there is not the harmony inside that fold which some Protestants fondly imagine.

There is no Church so rent by factions, jealousy, and discord, but the iron lash of papal authority is freely used to silence any public exhibition of the sore.

New York, especially, is full of discontent and discord, though an appearance of unanimity has been made by compelling priests to sign addresses of confidence in ecclesiastical superiors, whom I have heard

them speak of in private with the utmost contempt. Thus is the world deceived ; but if the world cared it might be saved this delusion.

Even the public press in America, controlled as it is by Catholics, has not been able to hide the miserable condition of the Church which it exalts, for there are too many in the Church indignant at shameful treatment to maintain unbroken silence.

My mission seemed to be an utter failure, when at last I was received by Bishop Wigger, a man like Bishop Bagshawe, who would look for himself into matters, and use his own judgment. But this act of kindness did me little service. America is ruled from New York, and the archbishop was determined that I should have the same unjust treatment at his hands as I had received from Cardinal McCabe. I knew that the hearts of the people were with me. I knew that they longed to see my emigrant house established, and were prepared to contribute liberally to it. But what could they do in the face of priestly intimidation and opposition ? Rome knows her power well, and she is unscrupulous in using it. It is needless to go over the painful history here. An archbishop who could hunt down a priest of blameless life, and make the lives of others a burden to them by acts of unmanly tyranny, was capable of doing anything that would injure a helpless woman. He took the worldly-wise policy of refusing to see my authorisations, because it suited his purpose to allow all the calumnies against me to go unchecked. Once, and once only, did I succeed in obtaining an interview with this lord of God's heritage, and on that occasion I presented him with the Pope's authority, and Bishop Bagshawe's translation of the document obtained from Propaganda,

stating that every charge against me had been fully investigated and disproved. The result was simply that he threw the Pope's authorisation on the table before him with ill-concealed anger, and declared that it was only a "toleration," the fact being that it was an authorisation, and one of the plainest kind, as can be seen from the copy at the end of this chapter. I was authorised "to make vows anew in the institute to be founded by me."

How could the Pope authorise me to make vows in an institute unless he also authorised the foundation of the institute? The one authorisation involved the other. I received besides the Pope's special blessing twice—once at my private audience and once at a public audience—for the institute which I was to found, and for the sisters, and many words of kindness and encouragement. Certainly when bishops and cardinals showed so very little respect for the Pope's authority they had no right to blame me for leaving the Church. I have shown more personal respect to the Pope than they have done.*

At my one and only interview with Archbishop Corrigan he told me that a very serious charge had been made against me. I was so accustomed to this kind of accusation that I did not feel very much interested, but when he said he could substantiate it by a letter in his possession, I was pleased, for I expected something tangible to which I could reply.

* I wish to call the attention of the reader specially to the similarity between the way in which bishops and others acted in my case, and the way in which the victims of the Inquisition were treated. The principles of the Inquisition still exist, but the opportunity to torture or burn alive has not yet been given to the Church, nor will it be until the Church is given the temporal power for which she so loudly clamours. The victims of the Inquisition were never allowed a fair and open opportunity of stating their case, by those who wished to destroy them—nor was I.

The archbishop's charge against me was that I had said "I would collect wherever I pleased, in spite of all ecclesiastical authority ; and that I had the Pope's permission to do so." I replied to his grace that I had never said anything of the kind, that even if I had wished to act in this way, I should not have been so foolish as to say I had an authority which it could easily be proved I did not possess. The archbishop left the room for a moment to get the letter, and returned smiling his satisfaction, as one would do who would for ever silence and condemn an offender by indisputable testimony.

The substance of the letter was this: The writer, whose name the archbishop would not tell me, said that he had spent an entire day searching through the papers of a gentleman who was dead looking for this letter of mine, in which I had made the statement complained of, and that he regretted to say he could not find it.

I looked at the archbishop in simple amazement, and I must admit, only the matter was so serious, I should have felt inclined to smile.

At last I said, "And so, your grace, this is the charge? I am accused by a priest, whose name you will not tell me, of having written to a gentleman who is dead, whose name you will not tell me, on a date which you will not tell me, and of having said that I would act in defiance of ecclesiastical authority. I ask your grace what would be thought if a charge was brought in a public law-court against the humblest person in America on such evidence?" His reply was, "Oh, I am sure you wrote the letter, all the same." I replied, "Then, your grace, there is no more to be said."

A Roman Catholic lady, who had been greatly interested in my plans, and had interested many

Protestant ladies, came to see me one day, and said, "I must give up all further efforts for you. Father ——— has positively forbidden it. He says you are not in good standing with the Church." "Well," I said, "Mrs ———, I am in good standing with the Pope, but I see that counts for very little in America; and I am in good standing with my bishop. Here is his letter; he says, 'I warmly recommend you to the kindness of the prelates on whom you may call.' Pope Pius IX. sent me a special brief, in which he said I 'deserved well of the whole Church,' and I have a document from the Propaganda, which says that I am 'worthy of all trust and confidence.'"

"Oh," she said, "I am satisfied, but of course we cannot go against the priests." The old miserable story, —the story which has been the ruin of the Roman Catholic Church in so many countries in so many ages. No matter what the priest does or says, it is "a sin against the Church" if any objection or criticism is made; and so all evil is condoned. It is certainly a very easy way of securing the power to do wrong unmolested. The lady was sincerely sorry, but what could she do? "Oh," she said, "do not be troubled," for I was crying bitterly; "you know the Church was always persecuted." "Pardon me," I said, "in this case it is the Church which is persecuting." She looked amazed, and replied, "Oh, I never thought of that," and went sadly home.

One of the greatest evils of tyrannical government is the sycophancy and falsehood to which it leads. I can well understand the terrible workings of the Inquisition, when I remember how I have suffered simply because I was an object of unjust dislike to some ecclesiastical authority. To please the "bishop" is

one object of the priest, who knows well how much depends on his goodwill. If the bishop happens to be mean or revengeful, what has he not in his power? I am a living proof of the uselessness of an appeal to Rome. In my case the result of my appeal has been simply ignored, or treated with contempt, and I might as well never have made it. I know this statement will be difficult for Protestants to understand, but the facts are before them; and if they will read the history of the Catholic Church, even as written by Catholics, they will find that my case has not been an exception.*

The public interests of the Church are the first consideration of the bishops, but this by no means prevents a very active exercise of power to forward his own interests, or to harass or crush those who, from any cause, are obnoxious to him. Obviously, the higher the prelate is in power and position, the more easily he can carry out his personal schemes of aggrandisement or revenge. Either from personal motives, or because they wished to find favour with the higher powers, I was made the subject of the most insolent treatment from many priests. Others, who were ignorant of the conspiracy against me, were anxious for the services of myself and sisters in their

* The case of Rosmini is clearly in point. He lived and died the life of a saint, and founded a distinguished religious Order of Charity, but his enemies, even since his death, have proved relentless. His writings, all of a religious and metaphysical character, were examined in Rome, and declared free from all error, some few years since. His enemies were enraged, but they bided their time. Within the last few months they had these works brought to trial again and condemned, but they took good care that the Rev. Father Lockhart, Rosmini's representative, and the head of the Order which he founded, should not hear one word of this proceeding until the foregone conclusion of condemnation was announced. This he has stated publicly.

parishes, and often arrangements were just on the point of conclusion, when all would be ended by a peremptory command. In one case the priest, who wished me to establish a convent in his parish, sent me the letter of the bishop forbidding it. If the priest had been a dog, or a man preparing to commit some crime, the language could not have been more offensive; but the same bishop died almost in the act of abusing the Pope and the papal court in unmeasured language, because a case had been decided against him.

Once when I was with some friends a priest came into the room (the Vicar-General of the Diocese of Philadelphia), and after looking at me in the rudest manner, said, "I hope you do not think I have come to call on you."

The Rev. C——n asked me to establish a summer home for girls in his parish. I gladly agreed, and obtained the consent of the bishop. I rented a house from a New York gentleman, a Roman Catholic and a lawyer. I believe he and his family had had a very unpleasant experience with this same priest, but as they were not in his power, as I was, they came off victors. When I went with this priest to see the place, we found some grass ready for mowing. I thought how useful this would be for our cow, when Father C——n turned to me and said he wanted the grass for himself. I certainly did think this very selfish, but I expected nothing else from persons of his class, and, in fact, I was used to nothing else. I was, however, very willing to do anything or give anything that would please him, and I said certainly he should have it.

The next day, to my great surprise, I got an in-

dignant letter from him by post to say he could not prevent my coming to his parish, because I had signed the lease for this house, but I must understand that he would have nothing to do with us, and that he would not come near the house while we were there. All this angry feeling was caused by a woman who was the caretaker of the place, and who told him I did not wish to give him the grass. It is difficult to understand how a man could be so easily deceived and so easily offended. The poor priest actually went to the bishop with his tale, but he did not get much consolation.

The woman had been caretaker of the place so long she looked on it as a permanent home for herself and family, and was very angry because we had rented it, and she told me she would bring "all the Tipperary men in the neighbourhood down on me." I did not mind this, but she said then I had no right to give the grass to Father C——n, it was hers, and she had a right to it as caretaker, and she always intended to give it to him. This, I am sure, was not true, but it answered her purpose. I replied, "Well, I will write to Mr. —— and ask him who has a right to it. If he says you have, you can do what you like with it." But I never said one word about Father C——n or not wishing to give it to him.

I had almost endless trouble about this wretched bit of grass. I wrote the simple facts of the case to Father C——n, and told him why the woman had told him this falsehood, and indeed the grass was not worth disputing about,

It took a long time to pacify him, but he never forgave me, and has been my enemy ever since. He made my life and the life of the sisters such a misery

to us, we were only too thankful to get away from him.

But of course it would not have suited him to have the true story known, so a new libel was manufactured and circulated, and every priest had it in New York and the neighbouring towns, that all the reports about me were quite true, for I could not agree with Father C——n.

It was sad to see a priest, who should have been above such things, believe the word of an uneducated, ignorant woman in preference to that of a sister, but I had already had experience of similar infatuations. I suppose the kind of life which priests lead is the cause of this. I had also another experience of the way in which a priest can act who is prejudiced against a sister without cause. Before I went to open a home for girls in his parish I had received a letter from a woman who lived in Baltimore, wishing to be received in our home in Jersey city. She said that she was a Protestant, but desired to become a Roman Catholic; that she had no Roman Catholic friends, and therefore could not give me any references.

I did not know what to do, but she wrote again and was very importunate. At last I agreed to let her come. I took her to the summer home in Father C——n's parish after she had been baptised and formally received into the Roman Catholic Church.

I soon began to have some suspicions that she was an impostor, but Father C——n took her up warmly. He had a sore feeling against me about the grass, and she soon found that he would not be sorry to hear anything to my disadvantage.

I was waiting quietly, as one has to do sometimes in difficult cases, until I missed forty dollars, and had

reason to be tolerably sure who had taken it. I went to the priest, as I thought it right to warn him, no matter how he might have acted towards me, and he admitted she had been giving him money, though she had only what she had stolen from me. Father C——n took the part of both the thief and of a girl who had made herself the companion of the thief, after all my warnings. He believed, or pretended to believe, all the ridiculous stories that she made up, but she had paid him well to take her part.

After some little trouble, I found out the whole story of this unhappy woman. Ada Stagg, as she called herself, was "wanted" in quite a number of places for theft. She had made a trade of imposing on sisters. She had gone to the sisters of the Sacred Heart in Philadelphia, to the sisters of the Good Shepherd in Baltimore, and to many others, and told the same tale of her desire to be received into the Roman Catholic Church; and she had so completely deceived these experienced sisters that she had gone through all the solemn mockery of this, without even being suspected by any of them, until having gained whatever object she had in each place, she disappeared as suddenly as she had come. Her reason for making convents the base of her operations was, that she knew the sisters would not like to expose her, as they would have to appear against her publicly.

In our case she judged rightly, for I did not want to add to my many troubles by exposing her. Father C——n took her and her friend under his protection; brought them, with a care worthy of better objects, to a convent in Newark; placed them under the special care of the superioress, as victims of my injustice, and then another report was carefully and

widely sent out, of my inability to agree with any priest ; and that these two "saintly" women could not remain in our institution because our religious observances were not strict enough for them.

When I got sufficient evidence to know who and what she was, though I did not know her whole career until later, I reasoned with her, and tried to convince her that even from a temporal point of view she could do better and be far happier if she would try to earn her living honestly. I hoped I had made some impression on her, she cried bitterly ; and knowing that I knew the evil she had told poor Father C——n of me, all of which he so readily believed, she seemed touched to see that I should be so anxious to help her.

Unfortunately for the poor girl, she had been so built up by Father C——'s promises of help, and his eager sympathy for her in the supposed injustice with which he thought I had treated her, that when, just at that critical moment, he sent a messenger to take her to the convent where he had arranged to place her and her friend, she dried her tears very promptly, assumed her old defiant manner to me, and all my hopes of her reformation had to be abandoned. Of course she knew well the great value of the letter which this priest had given her, and that even if he did find her out later, she would have the letter to work with all the same. I was told by the gentleman who had seen this letter that Father C——n kept up an active correspondence with these two women, and that he pretended to believe all they had told him of myself and the sisters, and wrote of us in a way which could not fail to do us a serious injury. When writing of me he always described me as that "ex-

nun," a title which he knew well I did not deserve, to say nothing of the disrespect to the Pope in speaking thus of a person to whom he had given so high a position in the Church.

I do not know what has become of this poor girl. The New York detectives were after her for some time. She had stolen a quantity of valuable clothing from the family with whom she had been living in Baltimore, all of which she wore when with us, and told me had been gifts from her father, who was dead. She had stolen a desk from a family with whom she had lived as a servant for a short time in Washington, and as this desk contained family papers, she had no difficulty in passing herself off as one of this family, and using their name. Her appearance, too, was in her favour, though she could hardly read or write. She was born a Catholic, of Irish descent, and knew her religion well. In fact, when the sisters began to prepare her to be received into the Church, we found she had nothing to learn, and the sisters in the other convents where she had previously gone through the same farce of being received into the Church told me they were also surprised to find her so well instructed. But she had always some plausible excuse, for everything that seemed questionable.

I have now to say a few words on a matter of great importance, and I have purposely reserved them for the conclusion of this book. These subjects are the unhappiness of sisters in convent life, and my own religious experience. I will speak of the former here, and reserve the other subject for the next and last chapter of the present work. No one can deny that I have had, not only ample, but even exceptional

opportunities of knowing the inmost secrets of convent life. I proceed to give now the particulars of a few cases which have come under my own immediate observation, in which sisters were driven out of convents by the injustice of bishops and priests, or by the cruelty of sisters. I often wonder, when Catholics make such an outcry when some Protestant exposes a flagrant case of cruelty to a nun, that they do not remember how many such instances can be found in the Lives of every Saint. Surely, if bishops and priests persecuted those who were so holy that they were subsequently canonised, it is no wonder if those who are supposed to be less perfect fall victims to episcopal malice. Surely, if a saint like Margaret Mary Alacoque could have been dragged by the hair of the head all over her convent by spiteful sisters, as her Jesuit biographer relates, it is no wonder if others have been treated in the same way. The lives of the saints even, with all the care which has been taken to eliminate anything that could tell against the Church, are a perfect mine of statements against Rome authorised by Rome.

I have already spoken of Sister Veronica. Her case has been spoken of to me by indignant Catholics. I never heard it mentioned by Protestants. It is very unfortunate that Protestants do not make more careful inquiries before they publicly endorse "escaped nuns" who have never been in convents. There are hundreds of nuns who have left convents who will not come before the public, sometimes because they have too much self-respect to allow their names to be mixed up with doubtful characters; sometimes because they have suffered so long that they crave for peace at any price, and will not come into the arena of

controversy. Their denunciations of Rome in private are none the less severe.

I met a lady in Toronto who had been some years in a convent, and who is now married. Mrs. D—— is a member of a Congregational Church there, and is living quietly and happily with her good husband, a convert, and a true convert, from Rome to Jesus.

In Baltimore I met a sister who had left her convent from the same reason—cruel injustice. As she was an excellent teacher, she was provided for by the priests in a school. It is not always convenient to allow persons of determined character to go out on the world, and tell their tale of suffering. I saw, and conversed with this lady. There are many who leave convents who do not leave Rome because there is no one to bring them to Christ.

The case of a Sister Gertrude was fully published in the American papers about two years since. She also remains a Romanist. I believe her married sister was also at one time a nun.

I have already alluded to a case in which I was requested to afford protection to an Irish nun, who had been shamefully treated by French sisters and priests. Miss B—— spent some time in my institution in Jersey City. A lady called on me there one day, Miss R——, who lives at present with her brother on Staten Island, New York. She told me the same tale of injustice and cruelty, and of indifference to the poor, which I have heard from so many. Her reasons for leaving, or at least the circumstances which brought matters to a climax, were, that when the sisters of the Sacred Heart wanted to present the superioress with a feast-day offering, it was found that the young ladies' purses had been so drained by

gifts and offerings, that it was useless to ask them for more. She was ordered to make a collection amongst the poor children, and she positively refused, indignant at the idea of asking from those who needed to have gifts instead of giving them. Miss R—— still remains a Romanist, at least nominally.

I met in Pittsburg the daughters of the late Mr. Burns, the great Catholic publisher. The sisters who had come there from France to found the convent were treated with shameful duplicity by the bishop. Even after the Pope had desired the bishop to give them their property, and let them return in peace to France, he refused to do so. One poor sister was an inmate of a lunatic asylum, her insanity having been caused by the fearful trouble which she endured till nature gave way under the strain.

I met two ladies in Chicago who had been in a well-known English convent, and had been brought to America on a foundation. I only wish the reader could have heard the bitter narrative of their convent experience. They are now simply infidels, and are earning their living as governesses. To do this they had to conceal their identity, for many reasons. Those who should have been their protectors and friends as usual tried to injure them in every way possible, until they got themselves lost in a great city, where people think very little of the previous history of those whom they employ. These ladies are very highly educated, happily for themselves. From my own experience I could well believe the history of the trickery and treacheries which they told me.

With one more case I conclude, and I could give many others.

A gentleman called on me one day while I was in

my convent in Jersey City, and begged I would take his sister into my institution under the following painful circumstances. She had been for some years a member of a Dominican convent in New York, but at last she became disgusted with the whole system, and said so too frankly.

As the Inquisition is not yet established in America, she could not be thrown into a dungeon, but the next cruelty to that was easily accomplished. She was pronounced insane ; and without any reference to the civil authorities, which Rome conveniently ignores, she was sent to Belleville Hospital as a lunatic, to be sent from there to Blackwalls Island, the place of detention for the vilest outcasts of New York. And this was the treatment vouchsafed to a "spouse of Christ." It would be impossible for me to convey to the reader anything like an idea of the revolting indignities to which this sister was subjected. She had not been guilty of any fault whatsoever, and certainly if she had been insane it was the duty, and it should have been the desire, of the sisters to have placed her in a private lunatic asylum, as they have the control and management of so many of these institutions. Surely one of their own sisters, if in such a state, demanded from them the loving care which they profess to lavish on the poor and suffering. But I would ask, if they cannot treat those of their own households better, what could be expected for a stranger, above all if that stranger had neither influence or money ?

Not the least revolting part of this outrage on humanity was the fact told to me by Miss S—— and her brother, that she was sent off to the asylum without her brother's knowledge. Romanists get very indignant when they are accused of such practices,

but here are facts. Sisters who could be guilty of such conduct as this should be made to feel the lash of the law, if not of public opinion; but so long as evils exist in the "Church," it seems as if no one dare expose them. Miss S—— managed to communicate with her brother with great difficulty through a friendly nurse, who for once braved the terrors of Rome to do an act of humanity. It so happened that I also saw the nurse, under circumstances which I will relate presently.

Mr. S—— came to the hospital and took his sister out. I asked him why he did not express his indignation in public, but he told me at once that he dared not do so. If he did he would be hunted down, and even Protestants would be against him. Further, he said what I knew was true, that the press dare not take the matter up. If any evil had happened in any Protestant institution, a dozen reporters would be on the spot to investigate all its details before an hour had passed, but the silence of the grave must be the rule when anything happens in a convent. It is amazing that Rome should have this power, but it is so. Let England beware lest she should obtain the same power in this country. The Inquisition not being tolerated as yet, the lunatic asylum is the substitute; and of course it is an infringement of the "liberty" of the Catholic to ask that any institution under Catholic management shall be inspected. Why must this be? Are Catholics above suspicion, or are they above the law?

I need scarcely say that the fact of my having protected Miss S—— was not much in my favour. I was too liberal for Rome, and I was made to feel it. I soon got her a good situation in a store in New

York, where she acquitted herself remarkably well for a lunatic ; and as far as I know she is still in the same place. What a contrast between her life now, and the cruel life to which she had been consigned ! It is very convenient for Rome at present to declare that every one who rebels against her creed or her injustices is a lunatic.

But I have said that I could tell more of the manner in which this poor sister was treated. When I was lecturing in Pittsburg, after I left the Roman Catholic Church, I spoke of this outrage. Immediately I had concluded speaking, a lady came on the platform and said, "Miss Cusack, I can tell you a good deal more about Miss S——. I was the nurse in the ward into which she was brought. A priest came in after she had been brought there, and ordered me in the rudest manner to get cords and tie her. I exclaimed, "Father C——, she is not insane ; she is perfectly quiet. Whatever may be the matter she is heart-broken, and we do not need to tie her down for that. But," said my informant, Miss H——n, "the priest was not satisfied ; with brutal violence he got cords himself, and tied the poor helpless sister hand and foot to the bed." Either he wanted to drive her insane, or he wanted to impress the doctors with the appearance of insanity. More probably his action was the outcome of a brutal nature, and how brutal some priests can be to women I know but too well.

Miss H——n took her nurse's scissors from her side and cut the cords, exclaiming, "Father, I am nurse here, and if I am dismissed to-morrow I will do all I can to protect a suffering woman, who is doing no harm either to herself or to any one else." The "Father" left the ward, but Miss H——n was

moved to another ward that evening, and dismissed soon after.

I have no instances of cruelty to children to record ; in fact, I would not have tolerated anything of the kind, nor did I ever see the least inclination on the part of the sisters to injure the children in any way. But some serious accidents occurred which were certainly the result of neglect, and I should make this book very much beyond reasonable limits if I recorded all the practical cruelty to children which I have seen in Catholic institutions, the result of indifference and ignorance. I could even quote from many Catholic writers to show that sisters and brothers are of all others the least fitted to prepare children for the battle of life, or to do anything for them except to make them bigoted Catholics. In that they succeed to admiration, and hence Rome needs and uses them.

NOTE.

THE following are taken from the reports given in the Nottingham papers, Nov. 1884, of a demonstration of welcome to the Nun of Kenmare. The Roman Catholic bishop, Dr. Bagshawe, and the principal dignitaries and priests of the diocese, were present.

An address was presented to the Nun, after which speeches were made by the bishop and others.

By a happy coincidence, a priest happened to be passing through Nottingham who had been an eye-witness of the work done by the Nun of Kenmare in the famine. He gave his personal recollections on this subject.

Canon Monaghan said :—

“ In the sacred name of truth, then, let it go forth, as far as the wing of the press may carry it, that the Nun of Kenmare is in England to-day, not by any act of her own will, but as the victim of that blind prejudice which sees in the noble-hearted denunciation of wrong only unwomanly boldness, and which would make

of patriotism a crime. Yes, the Nun of Kenmare is an involuntary exile from the land of her birth, and therefore more especially is it that the Irishmen of Nottingham will gather round her, to sustain one who has shed lustre on the convent for ever associated with her name, and on the genius of Ireland. It often happens in the history of those who are called by God to do a special work for the Church, and in a still more special manner to work for the poor, that they are misunderstood even by good people. This has been the case in a peculiar manner with Sister Mary Francis Clare.

"But if it is a crime in her to have written strongly for the poor, to have collected thousands of pounds to save them from starvation, to have prevented the commission of outrages on life and property by giving employment to men who were starving, such a crime is one for which, if the world condemns her, she is prepared to wait for the approval of her God at the last great day. Even had she acted unwisely and imprudently in carrying out this great end, her object and her cause might have gained her pardon. The Nun of Kenmare has been accused of coming before the public, of making herself conspicuous, of not remaining in the seclusion of the cloister, and on her behalf I would by all means plead guilty to it. God has called her to be a light to the Irish nation; a bright beacon-light bringing knowledge and love of virtue to Irish homes, and teaching, in lessons that will never be forgotten, the children of Erin how to serve God and love their country. This accusation comes with singular inappropriateness from Catholics, since we know that Pius IX. devoted his pen to record words of unsparing praise on his beloved daughter in Christ; thus helping directly to bring into greater publicity and prominence the eminent services conferred upon the world by the brilliancy of her genius, and her zeal for the interests of religion."

The Rev. Father Garvey, the priest alluded to above, said:—

"I shall confine myself to what comes within my own knowledge of the living and active charity of the good Nun of Kenmare. It is within my recollection—the time is not so far distant, some four or five years ago—that there was distress in Ireland. Sore distress it was, too. I saw hundreds begging for bread, and during the whole of this time the Government was sending a commission of inquiry from one end of the country to the other,

to find out if there was any distress in Ireland. Meantime, the people had plenty of time to die and starve ; but there was one charitable heart living and active, ever thoughtful of the wants of her own people, and that was the kind, charitable, self-sacrificing, highly accomplished, noble, gifted lady, Sister Mary Francis Clare.

"It is within my own knowledge that within ten miles of where I live, when at home in old Ireland, Sister Mary Francis Clare, when the cry of distress went up from that quarter, sent nearly £2000 to relieve the wants of the suffering poor. I shall not speak of anything beyond what I know personally. I remember another occasion when one of those grand storms that sweep our coasts occasionally came, bringing with it destruction to the boats of the poor fishermen. It was a terrible storm, and the boats were made simply into matchwood. The appeal was made to her ; her funds seemed inexhaustible ; and immediately she sent in all—I believe £250—however, she got it from Providence."

Bishop Bagshawe made a very long and eloquent address, from which we give only a brief extract :—

"I think it right that it should be shown to the Irish race throughout the world that Mother Mary Francis Clare's immense services to this religion and this country are duly appreciated by their fellow-Catholics of Nottingham in the new sphere of labour to which she has been called, and I think the Catholics of Nottingham are privileged, in that they should thus become the mouthpiece to express the admiration and the gratitude which is felt for her, I may say, without any exaggeration, by millions of their fellow-Catholics. Their words will be echoed in England, Ireland, America, and Australia, and they will be thanked for having uttered them. Mother Mary Francis Clare's claims to this admiration and gratitude are altogether exceptional, and I may say, unique in modern times, as well as being of an intrinsic magnitude, which it is difficult adequately to appreciate.

"I think that her writings are almost a literature in themselves, that she has written as many as fifty different works for the promotion of religion, and for the preservation and illustration of the history of her country, and that copies of them to the number of 350,000 have been circulated all over the world. I am astounded at the magnitude of her labours, and the greatness of her literary success, and I feel myself wholly unable to estimate or imagine the

vastness of the work for God and religion which she has thus accomplished.

"Mother M. F. Clare distributed eighteen thousand pounds to convents, priests, Protestant clergymen, and others, and thereby saved innumerable lives. Besides these merits, the money received for her books, and collected by her, was the main support of the Convent of Kenmare, and enabled them to feed and help hundreds of children in their schools. Two things, however, may possibly be said on the other side—one, that these great works were out of the sphere of her vocation, and unsuitable to a nun's life, and the other, that the reverend mother has sometimes written and said what she ought not to have done. The reverend mother in no way transgressed her rule, either in her literary labours or in her work for the poor. On the contrary, she only carried out the strict commands of her superiors, Bishops Moriarty and McCarthy.

"As regards the second, I would simply say that if she has occasionally erred by unnecessary vehemence in argument, that would be no ground whatever for refusing to recognise her transcendent merits. During the famine of '79, Sister Mary Francis Clare was visited by many persons, who, from various motives, came to inquire into the real state of Ireland; and personal inquiries, if carefully made, have invariably proved that the distressed state of the country was no exaggeration—the cause was but too apparent. Amongst those who visited the Nun of Kenmare were Mr. Charles Russell (now Sir Charles Russell), a name well known amongst you all, and a deputation of Protestant gentlemen from Newcastle-on-Tyne. Mr. Russell wrote some very severe criticisms of a certain great estate. The Protestant gentlemen wrote, if possible, still more severely. If Mr. Russell was credited with having a political mission, these gentlemen from Newcastle, who are well known, had no other object, whatever, but pure philanthropy. Both parties went to Sister Mary Francis Clare for information; to both she said, 'Go and see for yourselves.' Her work in saving the people from actual starvation was well known, and the people spoke of it fully, and freely, and gratefully."

Canon Douglas, who waited on Sister M. F. Clare with the deputation from the meeting, read her reply to the address. Canon Douglas proceeded:—

"I do not like to hear people daring to criticise the work of such a noble religious as Sister Mary Francis Clare. There are

people who, when there was a cry of famine in Ireland, gave their five shillings or ten shillings in the offertory, and thought that they had given the utmost that they could be expected to give to relieve a starving people. Sister Mary Francis Clare sent forth a cry throughout the world. It tried one's feelings to listen to that kind of people. I am not going to apologise for her. I wish to join in welcoming her to Nottingham."

CHAPTER XIX.

LEAVING ROME, AND SOME PROTESTANT EXPERIENCES.

“Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure
But One, who never changes—
Thy God, thy Life, thy Cure.

VAUGHAN.

“For the Lord is a God of judgment : blessed are all they that wait for Him. . . . He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry.’
—ISA. xxx. 18, 19.

I HAVE now to speak of my spiritual experiences in the Church of Rome, and of my leaving it. It will be remembered that I entered the Roman Catholic Church in complete ignorance of its real teaching, and I know that there are many who live and die in that Church in ignorance both of what it teaches, and of its moral condition. For example, how few are there at the present day who know anything about the new doctrine of the Pope’s infallibility ! If it is remembered that the Catholic child is not allowed to think for himself ; that the least, I will not say doubt, but even the merest momentary hesitancy about any article of the Church’s creed is treated as a mortal sin, the mental condition of Roman Catholics can be better understood. Certainly a Roman Catholic child or man or woman may ask a question, but let it be remembered that the reply will be not an

explanation which you may consider at your leisure, and accept or reject as it seems right to you. The answer to any inquiry is given as an authoritative statement, which you are obliged to believe without question.

Hence it is that Catholics never reason on their religious belief. They are simply told that such and such doctrines are true, and that they commit grievous sin if they even pause for a moment to consider whether they are or are not true. What a difference there is between this mode of teaching and the teaching of all Christian Churches who appeal to the "law and the testimony"! Let it be remembered that I was living under this condition of things, that if I doubted for a moment any teaching of Rome I was obliged to confess it to the priest, and that all the satisfaction I got was the assurance that I must believe whatever the Church taught without question, and if I failed to do so it was at the peril of my eternal salvation. Here is just where the fatal power of the Roman Catholic Church comes in. You are not allowed to think, and how then are you to come to a knowledge of the truth? You cannot even pray for light, because to pray for light implies the possibility that the Church does not teach you aright. You need only one thing, absolute submission of soul and intellect to the Church, which is divinely appointed to teach you. Oh, how many a poor soul is driven back from the very gates of life by the demon of darkness! All this is so entirely different from Christian experience, that it is no wonder if Christian people do not understand the position of the Roman Catholic, or give him the sympathy which is often so sorely needed. Yet you cannot help Romanists to come to the light unless you under-

stand fully how and why they are kept in darkness. Everything which seems so plain to you is so complicated to them ; and you, if you would bring them into the light, will need to understand their thoughts and ways, and to work for them in the way which will most truly commend itself to them.

The rising generation of Catholics have been taught that the Pope is infallible, and there is an end of the matter. They may ask for an explanation of this teaching, but if they do they are no nearer truth, for they must believe the reason given them without any discussion as to its merits. They are not allowed to read history unless it is history approved by Rome, how then can they know that they are deceived? As for the moral and immoral condition of Romanism, they are equally in the dark. Many Catholics have met with cases which have shown them that priests are far from being the angelic beings which they have hitherto believed them to be. But here again the Church comes in, and silence is commanded under such terrible pains and penalties that the frightened soul does not speak even when speech would be a duty. The evil is hidden, by force of spiritual terror, until a race arises who have learned to despise spiritual terrors, and then Rome is openly driven out, as she has been in every Roman Catholic country to-day. It may well be asked how it is that when Rome has been driven out by her own subjects, Protestants are so ignorant of facts as to support and encourage her?

My first doubt was, as I have said before, when the doctrine of the Pope's infallibility was made an article of faith, if the Church always believed it, how was it that for so many hundred years the Church did not teach it? Why was it open to any Catholic, in, say the eight-

eenth century, to believe the Pope was not infallible, and even to teach that he was not, as was done in the authorised Roman Catholic catechisms, and yet be saved ; and then in the nineteenth century, why was it made a mortal sin, a sin the commission of which would send you to hell if you did not believe? It was surely the veriest farce to say that a Church which could make such extraordinary changes in its creed had always taught the same thing.

But my life was a busy one. The reader will have had but a faint glimpse of the extent of my work, and I have said but little of my physical sufferings. Our dear Lord has told us that what we know not now we shall know hereafter. One of the things which I must wait to know is, why our dear Lord was pleased to withhold the light or the grace from me so long, which, when given, led me out of Rome? I have thought perhaps that I was left in Rome for the sake of others. God only knows ; but He does know. If I had left Kenmare, as I was sorely tempted to do, when I received such cruel treatment from some of the sisters, perhaps I should have known nothing of the state of the Roman Catholic Church in America, whereas now I can give information which is of the utmost importance to Christian people.

I have related how I felt the first time that I heard the Virgin Mary invoked as a Saviour. After a time the shock which this gave me passed away. So it is that others have been also shocked at first with evil, and at last have become accustomed to it. It should be remembered that the Romanist substitution of Mary for Christ is very attractive to human nature. Every best principle of the human heart is appealed to by the skilful priest to win souls to destruction. It is

salvation made easy to human selfishness. There is not one doctrine in the Roman Church against which Christians should protest so earnestly as against this worship of Mary. It is an insult to the Majesty of God to put a creature in His place. It is an outrage to the love of Jesus to declare that Mary is more ready to receive the sinner than He who shed His blood on the cross for sinners. To call Mary "Our life, our sweetness, and our hope," is to declare that some one besides Jesus is our Life; and yet He has declared Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Some years since, when I was in desolating sorrow in Kenmare, I prayed to the Virgin Mary as the all-powerful Mediator with God. This is just what Rome teaches. She is declared to be the hope of the hopeless, the refuge of those who are abandoned by God. Her Son dare not refuse her anything. I prayed sincerely and fervently, but I always felt that my prayers went into empty air and remained unheard.

I know that a sentimental semblance of devotion can be produced by music and incense, and all the other accessories to "pure and undefiled religion," which Rome is so fertile in using, but it is feeling which can be produced by an opera singer, or hypnotism. It is not religion, because it is not of God. But there are souls who are satisfied with this kind of religion, and who ask for no other.

In the Roman Catholic Church you are always recommended to go to Mary when you are in any special trouble, and if time permitted I could give many instances of this from Roman Catholic books. I believe that I was at last led to sever my connection with Rome from a painful and extended experience of the gross immorality of the whole system. I found

that the more power Rome had, the less moral her people were ! In England, where the restraining force of public opinion deprives Rome of all the immunity for which she clamours, she is something very different from what she is in Mexico, or in France, or in the United States. One bishop in the United States, driven to bay by peculiar circumstances, gave a record, which has never been disputed, of the crimes and immoralities of his own priests, which was simply appalling. I know that a similar record could be made truthfully by every Roman Catholic bishop in the world if he had the courage and the honesty to do it.

Another reason, which perhaps had the most weight in making me take the final step, was the fact that I could not but see that a priest might act as he pleased, so long as he did not sin too openly, and yet be in good standing with the Church ; while I knew many excellent priests, like Dr. McGlyn, who were hunted down by bishops on the most frivolous pretences. I knew also that an appeal to Rome was the merest farce. I had proved it in my own case. With the exception of Cardinal Manning and Dr. Bagshawe, I did not find a single bishop or priest who had even the least respect for the authorisation which the Pope gave me, or who paid the least attention to the document which was given in Rome, declaring that I had never been guilty of the absurd charges which Cardinal McCabe and his coadjutor had made against me. I began to see, at last, that bishops in matters which affected their interests acted as they pleased, and that they obeyed the Pope just as far as it suited them, and no further. Dr. McGlyn, who still declares that he is a Romanist, says that the successful priest

is the priest who gives his bishop the largest *douceur*, and I believe him. As for sisters, he has nothing but contempt for their narrow lives, and for their restricted work.

I found that from first to last Rome was a gigantic fraud. She professes to be "holy" *par excellence*, but where is her holiness? The more power she has the more degraded are her subjects, ignorant alike of wisdom, human and Divine. Even some of the Catholic journals of New York have written most severely of the neglect of the Italian priests, who do not give the simplest religious instruction to their people. I found that a large majority of the frequenters of the police courts and the inmates of the gaols and reformatories were Catholics, yet all the time we were being told that Rome, and Rome alone, gives a Christian education. The local government of New York is almost exclusively Romanist, and bribery reigns supreme, and is practised without a thought of reproach. Men who have fled, fearing the punishment of their crimes, if they are so fortunate as to have been Catholics, are restored with honour; if they have been Protestants, they languish in gaol. The Church takes care of her own. Public prayers have been offered in convent schools that men who were guilty might escape, because they had given money to the Church. What a lesson for the young!

I knew that promises were made freely to Protestant parents who sent their children to sisters, that their religion would not be interfered with; yet, the moment the parents had left the convent, the interference was begun. Though I did not see actual cruelty to children, I saw neglect of moral and physical training, which was cruel, though it is not

supposed to be. What more shall I say? I had made up my mind no longer to associate myself with the workers of iniquity or with a Church which sanctioned it.

Those who see sisters walking in the streets every day—and who has not seen them?—must know that such sisters could escape if they desired to do so. But it would be quite as great a mistake to suppose that many of them do not desire to leave a life which they have found intolerable as it is to suppose that they are physically restrained from leaving it. If I can make the true state of the case known to those who have hearts to feel for misery, this book will not have been written in vain. Surely mental suffering is as cruel, and often it is more cruel, than any physical suffering; but it does not appeal so much to the feelings. There are thousands who would rise up, even at the risk of their lives, and fight for the release of a sister whom they knew was imprisoned in a dungeon, who have but little concern for one who suffered as much, though she was not confined in a dungeon.

It is not because Rome is better than her creed that the evils do not exist to-day which existed in former times. The Inquisition exists to-day, but it has not the power to torture or burn alive; yet the creed which sanctioned torture is still in being, and only waits opportunity to act as it did in former ages. Pius IX., who deceived so many Protestants by his apparent liberality, canonised Torquemada, its most cruel of Inquisitors. It is the same with sisters: there are very few enclosed convents at the present time, hence it is impossible to imprison refractory nuns or starve them slowly to death. But the spirit of the Inquisition is still alive, for Rome never changes; and

the spirit of the cloister, which once inflicted the most cruel penalties and even perpetrated the grossest crimes, is still the same, and needs only opportunity. This should be understood before the position of the nun can be understood.

The fact is that to-day a sister cannot be prevented from leaving a convent, if she desires to do so ; but the question which people never consider is, What is to become of her if she does leave ? Her friends are all Romanists : even her own father and mother dare not receive her if she goes to them, for it is considered a fearful crime to leave a convent ; and they would suffer from the Church's ban if they countenanced her in breaking the rules of the Church. It is true that, when it suits the convenience of the Bishop, he will sometimes get a dispensation for a sister to leave the convent ; but even then her condition is indeed miserable. Her friends consider her a disgrace to the family, and have no welcome for her ; and she may be made as unhappy in the world to which she has returned as she was in the convent which she has left. Let it be remembered also that the poor sister has been brought up in the Romish system of spiritual terror, and that she thinks, if she leaves the convent, her eternal doom is sealed ; hence she argues, when unhappy, Better to suffer here than to suffer hereafter. Protestants view these things from their point of view, and wonder why sisters are not glad of a chance to leave a place where they are unhappy ; but there are reasons why a Romanist will feel very differently.

Everything is done, also, to make sisters afraid of Protestants ; they have been taught that every Protestant is already damned, and early impressions are not easily removed. They have been told that Protestants

believe every sister to be a wicked woman, and that they would have no sympathy for them. How, then, could they even think of approaching a Protestant?

In my case, of course, I had not to contend with all these difficulties; but I had been many years in the convent. I was in a position of great responsibility, and many of the sisters were as dear to me as if they had been my own children. How could I leave them all, and go forth alone and practically friendless on the world? I knew well, also, that I would never get one penny of support from the Church, though the same Church had been so much indebted to me for so many years. I had saved hundreds of poor Romanists from starvation, but I knew that would not bring me the slightest consideration. Rome professes to be a Christian Church, but Rome does not act on Christian principles.

Through accidental circumstances—if, indeed, such things are accidental—I had heard of several priests who had left the Church of Rome, and this was an encouragement to me. But I heard also that Protestants were very indifferent to those who sacrificed all for Christ, and that they were sometimes left lonely and destitute. I was not without some experience of this kind later. I had been reading some well-written papers in a monthly magazine of high-class literature, written by a clergyman of the Protestant (Episcopal) Church, on various subjects connected with the Romish system of salvation. This clergyman had been a priest of high standing in Maynooth, Ireland; but he had been obliged to change his name, so strong is Protestant feeling, or, rather, fear, in America, of encouraging any one who has left the Church of Rome, especially in the Episcopal Church. He was highly

esteemed by his bishop, who, of course, consented to the alteration in his surname. Few indeed knew that he had once been a priest of Rome.

I wrote to him, and had in reply some very valuable letters, relating his experience of Rome. He asked me if I had any objection to his telling the bishop of my correspondence with him, and of my thought of leaving Rome. I assented, knowing the high character of this bishop, who was himself a convert from the Unitarian to the Episcopal Church.

The result was that Bishop Huntingdon very kindly offered to come and see me, hoping by a personal interview to help me more than he could do by letter. He was my sole confidant, though others wished to appear such; but I was anxious for secrecy for many reasons. I was not unaware even then that Protestants have been deceived by priests who have left Rome, but have not left the evils of Rome; and that some so-called "escaped nuns" never were in convents, and have made statements which are absolutely without foundation. I knew, also, that there was a class of anti-Catholic literature, which is both misinforming Protestants and keeping back Romanists, who, whatever may be their convictions, will not allow themselves to be mixed up with frauds, or endorse statements which they know to be such. But there is this difference, and it is important: Rome is false on principle. Christian people search for truth, and when they find it, with rare exceptions they believe it, and cast aside error.

It has been asked (and I am always pleased to answer any questions which may be put to me) how it was that I was able to carry on this correspondence and to see persons without the knowledge of the

sisters. It should be remembered that I held the position of Mother General of the Order, which I had founded by the permission and with the full approbation of the present Pope, as given at an earlier period of this work. Hence all letters came through me, so that I could receive whatever letters I pleased. I had also the advantage of having been for many years engaged in writing, sometimes for the public press as well as in general literature, and had, in consequence, many friends amongst literary men and others with whom I did business. As a sister, I had written for the *New York Sun*; but when I left Rome, so strong is its power, that no paper in New York would dare allow my name in its columns. It was in the summer of 1888 that these things happened. We had at this time a Summer Home for working-girls at Englewood, near New York, which was a great success. I have not been able to enter fully into the work which I did as a sister, because it would have extended this book far beyond reasonable limits if I had done so; but I may say that few sisters have ever accomplished anything like what I have done for the poor. Archbishop Corrigan would not allow us to have a place at his side of the Hudson, for, though Scripture says the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the Romish bishop owns vast territories, which he controls as he pleases; hence I was obliged to buy land at Englewood, and build at great unnecessary expense. I could have got a suitable house and site easily, for far less expense, at the Archbishop's side of the river; but that would not be allowed, notwithstanding the Pope's approbation of my work, and the further fact that the girls for whom it was intended belonged to the Archbishop's own diocese.

I should add (for I desire above all to be just) that the Archbishop was within his strict ecclesiastical rights in refusing the permission ; but *summa lex summa injuria*. He had the right ; but, under the circumstances, his exercise of the right was very little to his credit. The governor of a province might have the right to refuse any favour to a person who came to him with the recommendation of the Queen, but what would be said if he refused even to treat such a person with common courtesy !

I had also suffered for several years from severe illness. My life had been despaired of several times, and I had prayed to die, as I once prayed in Kenmare, when my tormentors were more than usually cruel. Ah, how well I remember some long and utterly lonely summer evenings in Kenmare, when I used to go to the Infirmary and listen to the voices of the sisters enjoying themselves in the garden, without even one thought of the sufferer who had, perhaps, spent every moment of that day that health would allow in working for them and for the poor, to whom they were supposed to be devoted ! I was not now suffering in this way, for even the very few extracts which I have been able to give from the letters of the sisters, who were then my children, will show that they could not have loved me more or cared for me more than they did. These extracts will show, also, how they resented the tyranny and injustice from which I suffered as far as they dared, while trying to do the work approved by the Head of the Church. When I had decided to leave the sisters, I rented a little cottage in Englewood, at some distance from the Summer Home, which the sisters conducted for me, and had only one sister with me.

I wanted to secure my correspondence, for I knew well, if I did not do so, that every letter I left after me would be seized by the priests and destroyed, and then their existence would be denied. Fortunately, the sisters never had even the least idea of my plans, so that I was able to secure what was of such importance to me and to thousands. I was very weak, for I had not long left the hospital, where I had to undergo four operations of a very severe character. My illness was brought on entirely by trouble, and the persecutions of those whom the Church is pleased to call the Fathers of their flocks, and by the mental suffering I endured when I could no longer shut my eyes to the evils of Rome and its unchristian character.

How little people know of the venture it is to do so who think sisters ought to leave convents when they are unhappy—of the agony of heart and soul which precedes the change, and of the fear of the consequences! Prisoners who have been for years in a dungeon have been known to ask to be allowed to return to it once more, when they have found themselves in a new and strange world; and I, for one, would never be surprised if a sister who had left a convent asked to return to it, when she found herself treated, as I was, by so called Christian people, who had a right to give her every help in their power, and to wait with tender care till they had soothed her grief-wrenched heart, before they expected her to join a church or make a profession of religion.

My advanced age and very delicate health made it doubly trying for me to leave the only home I had. My near relatives were all dead, and I was alone in the world, and had to trust entirely to strangers.

How cruelly my trust was betrayed I have never told, but I tell it now for the help of others. When at last I decided to delay no longer, and had packed my trunks so that they could be easily removed, I engaged a lady, a Roman Catholic, a complete stranger, to travel with me. She knew who I was, as almost every Romanist knows. She asked no questions. I merely said I wanted to go away for a time, and needed the services of a secretary and attendant. She had left Ireland in consequence of the conduct of a priest, who was manager of the national school in which she taught,—and here, if time allowed, I could say much of the evil of allowing priests to be managers of schools,—so she was not prepared to look with very friendly eyes on the clergy, and understood something of what I had suffered.

Bishop Huntingdon, to whom I am for ever indebted, arranged that I should go to a Protestant convent, of which there are several in New York, until I had rested a few days, and then that I should come to be near him in Northampton.

I could have taken a large sum of money with me if I had chosen to do so ; but I knew well the result would have been that I should have been accused of robbing the convent. Thank God ! I knew Rome too well to trust her ; but at what a cost I had to buy my freedom ! No tongue could tell, no words could express, the agonies I suffered : little did I expect that I should have yet more to suffer then, and even since, from so-called Christian people !

At last the day came on which I was to bid farewell for ever to sisters who, whatever may have been their quarrels with each other, were certainly most true and faithful to their Mother. Those who think

it a light matter to leave all things for conscience' sake know little indeed of what it cost me at my age, and in my peculiar circumstances, to obey the call of God. I went out literally not knowing whither I went, and knowing nothing of Protestant fear of and subjection to Rome in America.

My immediate destination was, as I have said, a Protestant convent. I ought to have known what these institutions are, but at the time I certainly had no expectation of anything but a kind reception. I went there merely for a day; I needed only a brief rest, as the distance from Englewood to New York is very trifling. I parted with Miss M——, telling her to call next morning, when I expected to go on to Northampton, after I had changed my dress; for of course I still wore the sisters garb. The building occupied by this community of three Protestant "nuns" was very large, and surrounded by immense walls; in fact, outside it looked like a fortress. I was shown to the parlour by a servant, and after waiting some time a sister came to me, and said they had thought it better for me to come there instead of to their hospital, which was quite in the city, as I would be less noticed. I was satisfied, but a little surprised that she did not say a word of sympathy, but supposed all was right, as the arrangements had been made by Bishop Huntingdon. I was again left alone, and this time for two hours. At last I felt so ill that I could bear it no longer. I was becoming faint from want of food, as I had been unable to take anything in the morning before I left; and I was broken down from grief and excitement. I went to the hall, and tried to find some one. I saw a sister in the distance, and went to her to beg that I might be

shown to my room, so that I could rest, and to ask her for a cup of milk. She came with me, and after some hesitation she told me that their "superior" was absent, and in her absence there was no head. They were worse off than any Catholic sisters; for, notwithstanding their absurd aping of Rome, they knew nothing of conventual regulations, and fancied that no one should act for a superior in her absence. She further told me that there were only three "real" sisters in this establishment; that they did not agree well together; and the second sister was so angry, because she had not been consulted about my coming, that she said I should not be allowed to remain, as the "lady superior" was absent. As for myself, I had no means of knowing what had or had not been arranged; I only knew that Bishop Huntingdon's son-in-law met me at the station, and assured me that every preparation had been made there for my comfort, and that he had seen the sisters himself. I believe the poor sister who was telling me her pitiful history was sincerely sorry for my trouble; but she was a timid person, and as I learned later, had shut herself up in her "cell" to escape the attacks of the jealous sister. Night came at last, but for me there was no rest. I had some kind of food sent to me to a little room where I was at last taken, and thankful I was to be alone anywhere with my sorrow. The night brought one of the most awful storms I ever remember. I did not attempt to undress, but sat on a chair till daybreak. At daybreak a violent knocking was made at my door, and, before I had time to open it, a sister burst in and ordered me out of the house that instant. She said she had not given permission for my coming there, that she did

not know who I was, and that she would not allow me to remain another moment.

Such are the cruelties which may be expected, and which I know too well are the ordinary state of life, in ritualistic convents. This woman was the "lady superior," and had arrived home during the night. She wanted to assert her dignity, a point on which imitation nuns are always sensitive. It was in vain that I pleaded with her, imploring her even for the love of God to allow me to remain till ten o'clock, when I expected the Bishop's son-in-law and Miss M——. It was in vain that I told her I did not know one single human being to whom I could go in New York. Like Miss Sellon, and women of her class, she had not even common humanity ; and such are the persons who are permitted to govern reformatories and to guide youth !

At last, when I saw that this woman would have thought very little of calling in police to drive me from her splendid home, I decided that I would risk all, and go to an hotel where I had been before as a sister. I knew that, if I went to any hotel in New York as an escaped nun, I would not be tolerated for a moment ; but, as I was in the sisters' dress, I was safe. But I was also very anxious to escape any kind of newspaper notoriety, and I was so well known that I knew the reporters would follow me if I was once found, and make my life still more bitter than it was. I doubt if any poor soul was ever so cruelly tried. I remembered then a place where I had stayed when on business in New York. It was with a lady who kept a very large boarding-house ; and I decided to go to her, and tell her my pitiful story, and to stay with her if she would allow me, until I could hear

from Bishop Huntingdon. But I did not know even if she would receive me, nor was I quite sure of her address. I wrote down the nearest address to it that I could remember for Miss M——, and begged the sister at least to give the paper to her when she came. Would it be believed that even this act of common charity was refused! Miss M—— did call at the time I asked her to come, but she was told by the “sister” that I had left, and they did not know what had become of me.

Bishop Huntingdon’s indignation was expressed in very plain words, both to me and to the sisters, when he heard of their inhumanity, but that was of little use to me.

I was very kindly received by the lady to whom I went, and who did all in her power to help and comfort me. Through a well-worded advertisement, suggested by her, I managed to let Miss M—— know where I was, and she came to me. She had supposed naturally that I wanted to slip away from her, though she said it was not like me to act in this way. Her indignation, when she heard my account of the way in which these poor imitators of Rome had acted to me, was some little comfort.

It would be of little interest to enter here into the history of my trials, disappointments, and discouragements, while I remained in America. Everywhere Rome rules, and everywhere Christian people bow before the golden image, consciously or unconsciously.

It was in vain that I pleaded with Christians of all denominations to help me to establish a quiet mission for Romanists in New York. They were afraid, or they were indifferent. I was amused to find some ladies in Baltimore very much interested in the McAll

Mission in Paris ; but to do anything for Romanists at home would not be heard of. To work for the conversion of Romanists at home would have required some moral courage and sacrifice ; it was very interesting and quite safe to work for them at a distance.

I was supported for some time by the generous kindness of Bishop Huntingdon, a man far richer in Divine grace than in earthly goods. After my book came out, I had for a time some little income, till the sale died out ; and then I was helped by lectures. But in this matter also I had many discouragements. The few ladies who were most in earnest in the work of saving their country from papal domination had been deceived by an adventuress, and believed every word she said, to their grievous loss. I could not countenance the woman, and consequently was not able to do as much as I might have done otherwise. When it was too late, it was found that my warnings would have saved much misery if they had been heeded in time.

I spent some time in Toronto, and received the greatest kindness from many Christian friends, and a warm welcome ; and friends there still correspond with me.

I managed for some time to keep my residence quite secret from the sisters, and above all from the reporters, who, in America, are expected to supply their papers with news, true or false, as to every event of any consequence. But, of course, a time came when I could no longer remain in concealment. Indeed, my only object was to escape persecution and to have a quiet time to write my autobiography.

Of that book I have spoken already. I went to Boston, when it was near completion, to see my publisher ; Miss M—— still accompanied me. She was

a great comfort to me, and full of sympathy, as she well knew all I had done for the poor in Ireland, and thought it should have brought me some consideration. One morning she came to my room very early, and said abruptly, "Miss Cusack, I am going to leave you." I exclaimed in amazement, "Why, Miss M——, what has happened?" "Oh, it is no matter," she replied, and at once began to pack her trunk. I was too stunned to reply for a moment, and then the real state of the case flashed on me. I said, "Miss M——, you have told the priest you are with me." She did not deny it; she had been to the Jesuit fathers for confession, which means for the purpose of revealing every secret of family life; and she had been ordered by the priest to leave me without one hour's delay.

I said, "You are engaged by me by the month, and at least you must wait until your month is finished." It was not of the least use. The laws of the land wherever Rome is are obeyed, when they cannot possibly be evaded; but they are obeyed as an evil and not as a duty. When a "heretic" is concerned, there is no law. Miss M—— had her orders from a society far above all law, and she submitted as in duty bound. What was I, or who was I, but a hapless being under the ban of a mighty Church!

At that time I thought I could not do without a personal attendant, as I was advanced in years. In my early life, I had always a maid of my own; and later, in the convent, I had a sister to do anything for me which my delicate health made necessary. I was utterly alone. No Christian home had been opened to me. No Christian heart had asked if I needed love or care. When I think of all I have suffered, I wonder

that reason did not fail me, and that a merciful God did not end my sufferings at the hands of man, by taking me where the wicked can no longer trouble, and the weary are at rest.

I was staying in a large boarding-house, but there was not one to concern herself for me. There was, however, some one to concern himself for Miss M——. In order to keep her, if possible, till I could find some one in her place, I refused to pay her wages if she left me without notice. But a gentleman, under the control of the omniscient Jesuit, came forward, and told me he would protect Miss M——, and demanded her full wages for a month. I had spirit enough left to refuse this last demand of insolent tyranny, but it was of no avail. Later I found that I could not afford to pay a servant, no matter how much I needed one; and I have lived alone.

After I left the convent in Englewood, I wrote to the postmaster of Jersey City, and desired that all letters for me should be sent to an address which I gave him. It is perhaps needless to say that he was a Romanist. Some time passed, and I did not receive even one letter. My correspondence was always very large, and as soon as rumours went round that I had left the convent I knew that it would be greatly increased, but still no letter came. I wrote again, but no notice was taken of my communication. America is supposed to be a free country, but it is not a free country for those who leave the Church of Rome. After a time, which may not be long, the liberty of Protestants will be restrained, to suit the interests of Rome, as, indeed, it is even now to an appreciable extent. At last I received a letter from a gentleman in Harrisburg, who managed to get my address, who

told me that he had written to me at once when I left the convent, but, knowing no other address, had directed his letter there, with orders to have it forwarded to me. As I did not reply, and as he knew something of Romish rule in the States, he concluded that the letter had never reached me. He wrote to the convent demanding the return of the letter, and threatening legal proceedings if his demand were not complied with. He was well known, and Rome is always afraid of publicity. His letter was sent back to him, opened of course, and very much soiled. It had evidently been handed round, and there was no doubt much triumph that I had been deprived of any source of comfort in my trying circumstances. I got him to press the matter further, but of what use?

No one dares oppose the power which, like the octopus, has her fateful coil round every official. If they are not Romanists—and the great majority of offices, high and low, in America are in the hands of Rome—they are too much afraid of doing anything to displease their masters.

I might multiply instances of the power of Rome; and I believe it a sacred duty to England, the only hope for Christ, to say at least a few words on this subject. I was asked to a reception some time after I had left Rome by a lady in New York, a prominent member of the Presbyterian Church. Indeed, her husband is a deacon. She was almost the only lady in that city, or anywhere else, who ventured to call on me, or make even the least effort to help me in my desolation. As we were about to proceed to the dining-room for lunch she whispered to me, "We must not speak of religion at table, for my waitress is a Roman Catholic." I must admit I felt inclined to leave

the house. Here was a party of some of the most devoted Christian women in New York, and they dare not say a word about religion at their own dinner table because a poor Irish servant girl was present. Now this is by no means an exceptional case. The help (servants) in America are almost exclusively Irish and Catholics; and their Protestant and sometimes Christian mistresses are so afraid of Heaven alone knows what, that they will not even give them the opportunity to hear the truth incidentally.

I thought of a little captive Jewish maid in the land of the Syrians, and how she was not ashamed to declare her faith; and I thought how the poor Irish girl, far from the land of her love, had subdued a whole nation! Would to God it had been for Christ! There is no reason whatever for this Christian cowardice. Rome is, of all Churches, the one which yields most quickly when a determined front is shown; but can you blame her, when Christians are ashamed of Christ, if she is bold in defence of error?

I told this circumstance to the Rev. Dr. Strong, who has done some good work, not without much opposition, in trying to save his country. "Oh," he said, "I have had a worse experience often. I have been silenced at table many times by the lady of the house because a Catholic help was waiting at table." No wonder that Rome is triumphant! Will it be any matter of surprise if Christ yet visits on His people their cowardice? May He not make the enemy, of whom they are so senselessly and at present causelessly afraid, the instrument of their punishment? If the fires of the Inquisition are lit in America before many years have passed, the American people have planted

the tree from which the fuel will be carried to enkindle them.

There are in New York many homes for girls ; but in these homes, built and endowed by Christian people, the Bible must not be read publicly, because Romanists enter them and avail themselves of the wealth of Protestants to save their own institutions.

The injustice to Romanists, in depriving them of all means of knowing the truth, is not the least of all the evils which threaten America with spiritual danger. I met quite a number of ladies who had been converted from Rome to Christ many years since, who traced their conversion, with thankfulness, to having been in families, when they came to that country first, where family prayer was the rule. Those who engaged them as "help" said, "We have family prayer ; we expect every one in our house to attend. You can worship wherever you please on Sundays, and we will give you every facility to attend your church, but in this one thing we cannot change." The consequence was that these emigrant girls attended family prayers, and were often converted. I know one now who has raised herself to the position of being one of the first milliners in New York, and heard the story from her own lips. But she is obliged now to keep the matter secret ; it would be a serious disadvantage to her to-day if it was known how she became a Christian.

Thus is the power of Rome strengthened day after day, and the poor Catholic is deprived of any opportunity of hearing of Christ by the cowardice of Christian people. If all Christians, or even a small minority, refused to take any girls into their families who would not attend family prayers, there would be no difficulty in getting those who would do so. Rome lives on

Protestant support, and, sooner than lose it, many things would be allowed which are now forbidden, because they can be forbidden with impunity.

It will be easily understood that my residence in America, after I left the Roman Catholic Church, was far from pleasant. It is true that I met some few who were a little alive to the dangers which threaten their country; but, for the most part, I was carefully avoided as one who was not in good standing with the "Church." While I was a Roman Catholic Protestants supported my institutions liberally, who would scarcely venture to speak to me when I had left the "Church." A judicial blindness is over even Christian people; they do not see their danger. How, then, can they arouse themselves to meet it? Unfortunately, the few who have been at all in earnest have been so deceived by adventurers that they have been led to take a false view of the evils of Rome. In trying to combat evils which do not exist at present, they have overlooked great evils which do exist; and so more harm than good is done, and Rome goes on her way triumphant.

I left America with a sad heart. I left behind me many Romanists whom I could have influenced for good, if only Christian people had helped me to do a work which no one but myself could have done. I was left alone, and sad, and ashamed to see the Catholics who came to me, because how could I tell them that Christian people were afraid of their Church, or to open any door for their deliverance? Dr. McGlyn has shaken thousands in their belief in Rome, but he has not led them to Christ. They will become infidels, as the Catholics of France and Germany have become; and some one will surely have to answer for their souls.

I tried in vain to see the sisters. Protestants are persuaded by a wily cardinal or a plausible Jesuit that Rome has changed and become liberal. I think my history should be sufficient proof to the contrary.

I have told how Rome controls the post-office. Mine is but a solitary instance of its power in that direction. As for the press, Rome makes no secret of her power. As soon as it was known openly that I had left Rome I was attacked ; not in the Catholic press,—Rome was too wise for that,—but by the Protestant press. I was grossly libelled by a daily paper ; and, though it was so plain a libel that it could not be disputed, there was not one Protestant lawyer who would act for me. When I left the convent, having been the superioress all the money in the bank stood in my name, and the deeds of property, etc., etc. I could have caused the sisters the most serious inconvenience ; but I very unwisely signed over all that was in my name, having a letter from the sisters who took my place, as superior, to say that I would be provided for. I need scarcely say that no such provision was made ; and a promise of that kind, or of any kind, is not considered of even the least value when made to a “heretic.”

Until the sisters had got all money and other arrangements made in their favour, they wrote to me frequently and with the greatest affection ; but, as soon as they had all they wanted, I could not get even one word from them. I do not blame them, for I know their hearts are with me ; but I know they are under a power which is of iron in its cruelty, and “cruel as the grave.” I was well watched, and I must admit that knowing this made me feel the indifference of

Protestants still more. It was distressing to me, also, for I knew that this would be a great drawback to those who might think, even for a moment, of following my example. After Rome had deprived me of every means of support, the effort was made with diabolic design to try and bribe me back to Rome. A Jesuit priest called on me, and after a few words told his purpose. He drew a large roll of dollar bills from his pocket, and said, half-laughing, "Now, mother, we all know very well that you are having a hard time, and that Protestants are too afraid of us to help you ; I will give you all the money you want, if you will give me your word that you will cease writing and lecturing. I will not even ask you to go back to the convent ;" and he tried to push the money into my hand. I stood up and simply pointed to the door, saying, "I can starve, if it is the will of God ; but your money I will never take, no matter how tempting it may be in my hour of need." Again and again he tried to press it on me. For all reply, I said, "If you do not leave the room, I will," and I went towards the door. He left me, somewhat surprised that he had not succeeded better ; and if he knew, as I fear he did, how I was then circumstanced, I do not wonder that he was amazed at my refusal of help, offered on such apparently reasonable terms. I had one comfort, however : if Rome had not known that my lectures and writings were very damaging to her, such an offer never would have been made.

Later, I found one good and true friend in New York,—the Rev. Dr. McArthur, of Calvary Baptist Church. He did all that he could have done for my help and comfort ; but, with many cares and a large membership, it was impossible for him to undertake

the uphill work of interesting those who cared very little for what I had so much at heart.

It became plain to me that I must return to England. I had received many letters from ladies in England as soon as it was known that I had left Rome ; and I saw, from their tone and kindness, that I might hope to find practical sympathy in this country, at least from some Christians. Here Rome does not rule; and every effort is made by faithful souls to prevent her from ever being the dominant power which she is in the States. May God in His mercy keep England free ! and may God in His mercy grant that she may never be ashamed to have the Bible read in her households or her public institutions, no matter who may object to the Word of God being the daily food of His people !

APPENDIX.

THE following extracts from letters, addressed to me by the sisters at different times, will show how they felt for my sufferings. Even now I know I should have many expressions of their love and sympathy, if they dared to speak. That they dare not breathe one word of affection for me, or one of inquiry about me, is another evidence that even in free England Rome tyrannises and rules. Oh, my beloved sisters, if this ever reaches you, know that I love you as dearly as ever, and pray that God may yet lead you into the fulness of His love and light!

Those who may wish to correspond with me can do so by addressing to the care of Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row, by whose kindness letters are forwarded to me without delay.

“CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART,
“NOTTINGHAM, *May 7th*, 1886.

“DEAREST REVEREND MOTHER,—We are in a most anxious state of mind, having just received a letter from Mr. F——, that you are in a hospital in Washington, and dangerously ill. I might easily know that something serious was the matter, you could not bear up any longer. Oh, cruel, cruel apostles of to-day, how unlike to the spirit of the first apostles! If there is anything objectionable in the Order of Peace, why not say so, and have it made right? and, if there is not, why do they not help a work that has the authority of the Holy See, and has for its sole object the glory of God and the salvation of souls? Mr. F—— tells us you have a good doctor,—that is a consolation; but, Mother, I do not expect that you will ever be free from

suffering in this life. The sisters are all very grieved for your suffering. You will be comforted to get a line of sympathy from each of your loving children on this side. I fear to tell the poor sisters in Grimsby: they will be so grieved, I will wait until I hear again. Sister A—— is better. Ever your loving child,

“Ev.”

Extracts from some letters written to me by the sisters, when I was obliged to go to Dublin in November 1883, and was so hopeless of getting the Archbishop of Tuam to do us justice.

Sister M—— writes :—

“MY OWN DEAREST REV. MOTHER,—Alas! what can I say to comfort your sad heart? We can only cry out with Jesus, abandoned on the cross, ‘My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’ It is the saddest of all to think that we are not able in any way to alleviate your heavy sorrows, my own dearest Mother. We are all so thankful to Father Gaffney for all his great kindness to you.”

Sister M—— R—— writes :—

“It is impossible for you to be well, when you have so much to suffer. Dearest Mother, do not be uneasy about us: we are doing our best. We had the Life of St. Gertrude read at dinner to-day. It is very cold. I hope the frost will not injure your throat. I cannot tell you how grieved we were when we heard of your serious illness. I beg of you not to be the least uneasy about us. You would be comforted if you saw how well each sister is performing her duty, as if nothing had occurred to cause us pain; and you know all that we are suffering. Sister M—— J—— is as prudent as if she had been a sister for twenty years; and Sister M—— E—— is as busy as ever in the schools; every observance is kept as regularly as if you were here.”

Another sister writes :—

“Do not be anxious about us, dearest reverend Mother. Each individual sister performs her regular duties with the greatest possible exactness, and all your counsels are and shall be carried

out to the letter, and the spirit of the letter." [The sister then tells me how the school has been injured by an outbreak of measles, knowing that, next to the perfection of the sisters, this was nearest to my heart.]

When I have read these dear letters, I have thought how often and how falsely the charge of being indifferent to the sisters' perfection in the religious life was brought against me, and believed by those who had an object in believing it. The sisters' letters, and still more their lives, are the best evidence of the teaching which they received.

In a letter dated November 18th, 1883, in reply to one of mine in which I had to tell the sisters how little hope there seemed of the Archbishop of Tuam doing us any justice,

Sister M—— E—— writes :—

"MY OWN DEAREST MOTHER,—With a breaking heart we all read over Sister J——'s letter this morning. Oh, good God ! was there ever, since our Divine Lord, who trod the winepress alone, any suffering or abandonment like that which you now endure ! Would to God that my life, accompanied by every kind of suffering, would be acceptable to the Divine Majesty, and spare you, dearest Mother, to accomplish His own work. I have already made the offering before the tabernacle, if it is His Divine will. I can say no more.

"You know all we feel. We shall not sleep much to-night. Surely the archbishop, knowing the great charge entrusted to him, will remember the account he will have to render at the great tribunal. O dear and deserted Mother, try and keep up, for the sake of the poor faithful youth of Ireland. Surely our good God will not take you away from them in, I might say, the beginning of your labours. I am, my own dear and suffering Mother,

"Your devoted and afflicted child,

"SISTER M—— E——."

It will be seen from these letters how dear this work at Knock was to us all.

I shall only add here a letter, which will be of interest

to Catholics, many of whom I hope will read this book. This letter was written to me after I had got the Archbishop's consent to go to England, to consult Cardinal Manning.

"ST. FRANCIS XAVIER'S, DUBLIN,
"December 13th, 1883.

"I was very glad to hear from you this morning, as I was very anxious to know how you were getting on amidst the troubled waters with which you are surrounded; for surely you are at present on a more tempestuous sea than when you were crossing the stormy Channel a few days ago.

"I trust that your courage and prudence, and above all, the protecting hand of God, will bring you safely through all your difficulties. I am writing by this post to Sister Mary Joseph at Knock, to encourage and console them for your absence. Your faithful children at Knock are very good, and deserve great praise and consideration. I hope soon to hear that the horizon is clearing before you, and that yet all will be bright and glorious sunshine.

"Ever yours very sincerely in Christ,
"J. GAFFNEY, S.J."

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Notices of the Press (*continued*).

irreligious) system, rests on the dense ignorance of its votaries. Even a slight knowledge of revealed truth would be fatal to the pretensions of the Papacy. The author tells us that the best educated of Roman Catholics are entirely ignorant of the Bible. The great duty of the hour is to enlighten these unhappy people as to the true nature of the system that enslaves them. Under the circumstances, that is no easy task, but we are hopeful that it is being gradually accomplished; and Miss Cusack's book would go far to bring it about if the mass of Romanists could have the opportunity of reading it."—*Christian*.

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